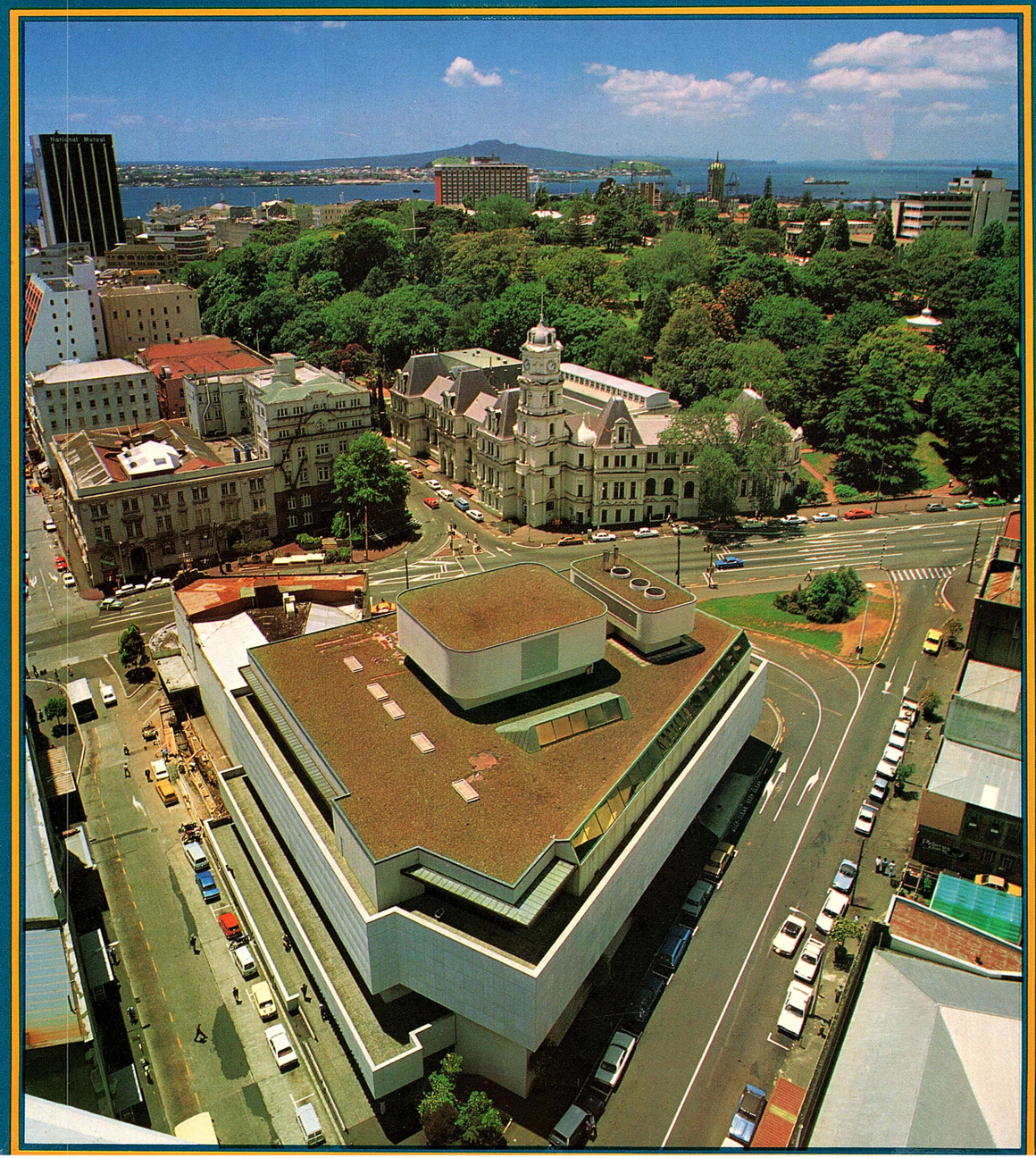
The Governor's Gift

The Auckland Public Library 1880-1980

Wynne Colgan



THE GOVERNOR'S GIFT
The Auckland Public Library 1880-1980

Governor Grey (Sir George Grey, 1812-98) was for half a century the dominant figure in New Zealand public life – governor for two terms, superintendent of Auckland province, parliamentarian, prime minister and again member of parliament.

When Sir George Grey expressed his willingness to donate books to an Auckland public library and the inadequacies of the Auckland Mechanics' Institute library were exposed, moves began that led to the establishment of the Auckland Public Library in 1880.

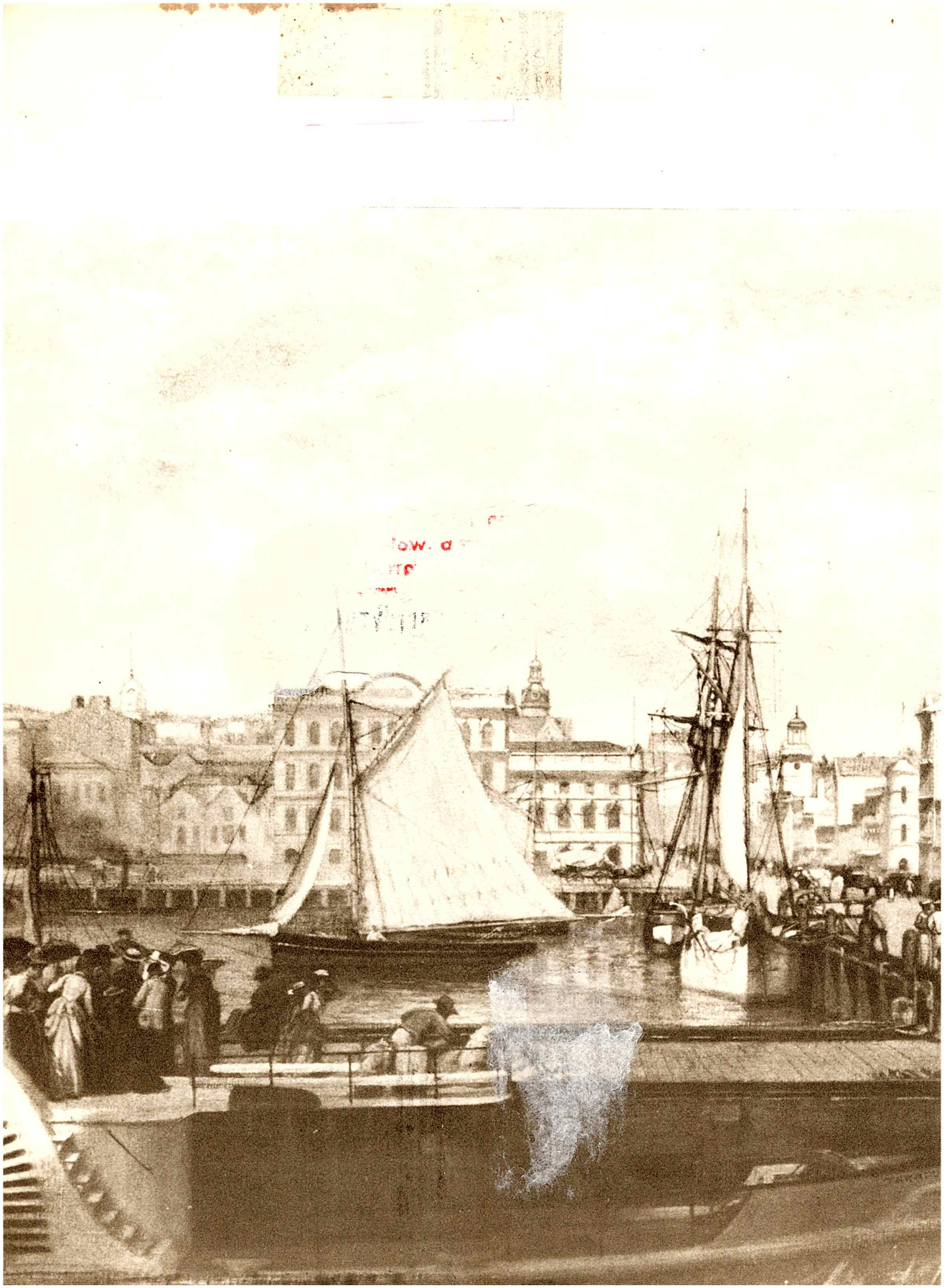
When Sir George Grey confirmed his proposed gift, it was more generous than anyone had imagined possible. The 14,000 manuscripts and books were clearly too valuable to be housed in an old building; there followed the erection of a new library and art gallery, opened in 1887, the building that the art gallery continues to occupy.

Grey's generosity has prompted many other citizens to make personal and business gifts to the library, some munificent and others modest, all contributing to the comprehensive quality and services of the library.

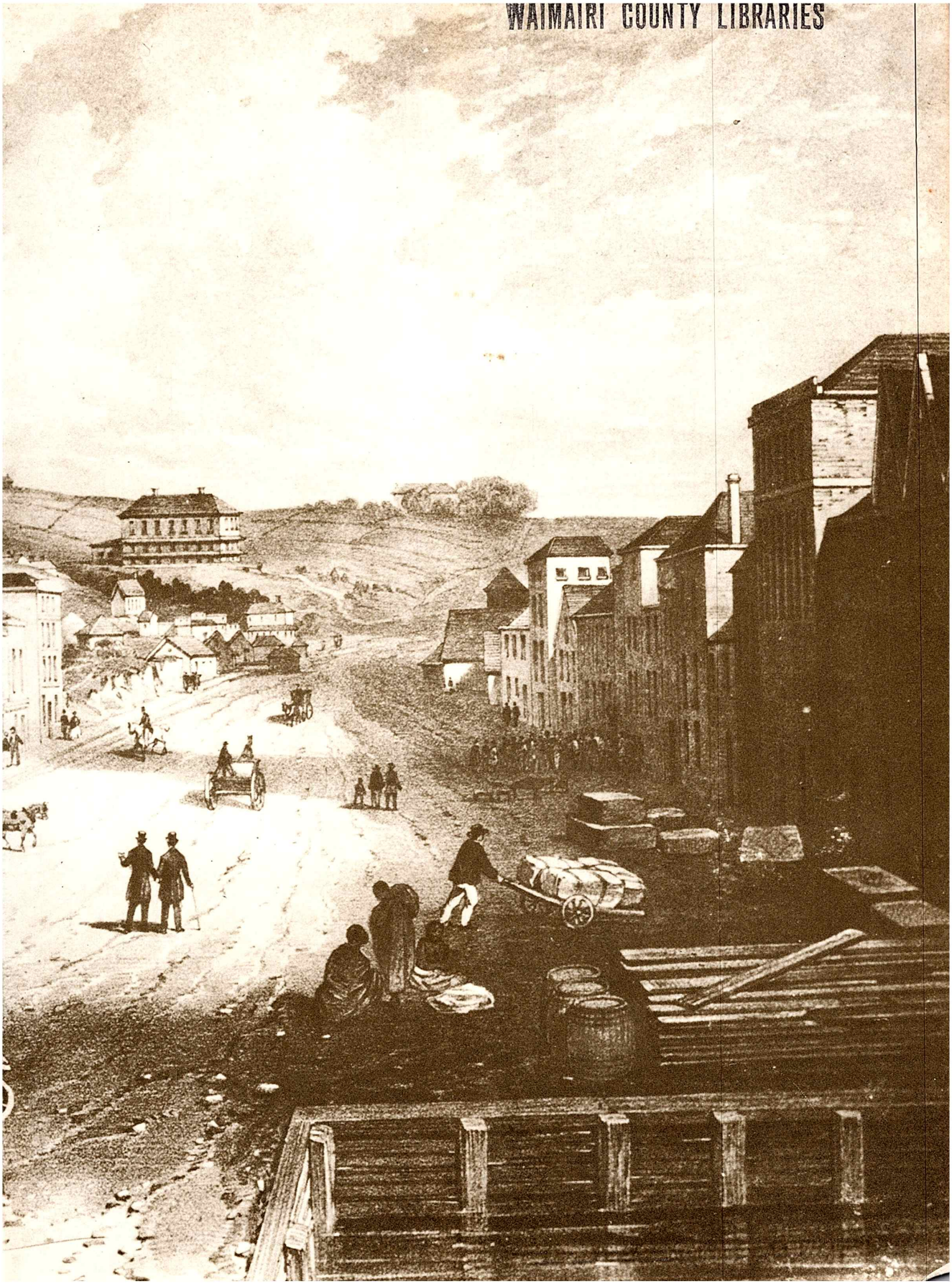
As Auckland has grown so, too, has the library. In the number of its branches, members and books it has become the largest municipal library in New Zealand. The central building opened its first stage in 1971 and is in its final construction stage as the library celebrates its centenary.

This commemorative volume charts the progress of a great library through a hundred years of crowded history. It also provides fascinating profiles of personalities and events, and an account of the original library, the Auckland Mechanics' Institute. For the first 40 years of settlement the institute was the city's principal library and social centre.

The Governor s Gift is not only the story of a major public library and the people who have guided it through its first century. It is also in outline a lively social history of a burgeoning city over the period of 140 years.



WAIMAIRI COUNTY LIBRARIES



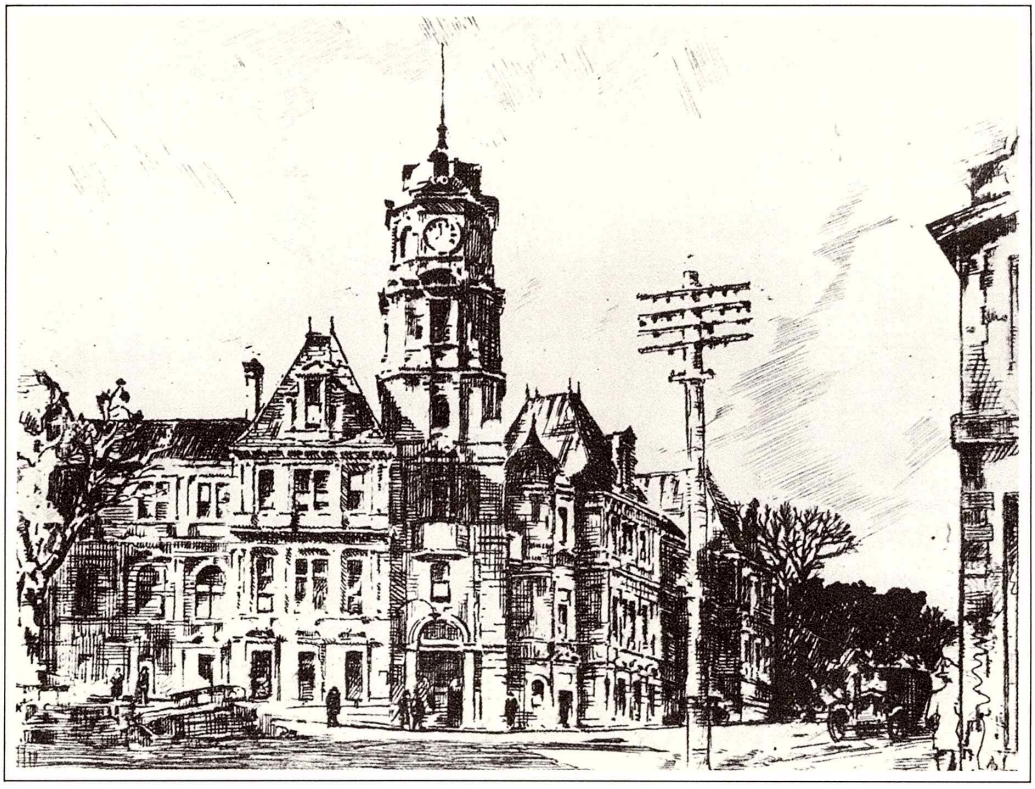
Algi Tunnicliffe
1991

WAIMAIRI COUNTY LIBRARIES

THE GOVERNOR'S GIFT
The Auckland Public Library
1880-1980

Front endpaper : Auckland 1852. The principal streets are Queen Street and running to the left of centre Shortland Street. On the left of the foreshore is the original Government Store. Behind it and to the left can be glimpsed the steps leading to the Auckland Mechanics' Institute. Other prominent landmarks are the Wesleyan Chapel (behind the Store), Partington's Windmill on the centre skyline with, to the right, the Wesleyan College. From a lithograph by P. J. Hogan.

Back endpaper : Auckland 1887. The buildings on the skyline include, from left, the Auckland Public Library (with tower and flag), opened that year, the Waverley Hotel, Victoria Arcade (with tower), New Zealand Insurance Company (also with tower) Palmerston building, Gladstone building and Auckland Harbour Board building. With the exception of the library, all have been demolished, many in the course of developing the area bordering Queen Elizabeth Square. From a painting by E. A. Gifford.



Auckland Public Library 1887-1971
Copperplate etching by T. K. Donner

WAIMAIRI COUNTY LIBRARIES

THE GOVERNOR'S GIFT
The Auckland Public Library
1880-1980

by
WYNNE COLGAN

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and
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PREFACE

The Governor's Gift typifies the pride that Aucklanders have in their public library system. The book's title records the inaugural benefaction that brought the Auckland Public Library into being.

Sir George Grey, one of New Zealand's greatest public men, decided to divide his personal library between the two cities he loved the most – Cape Town and Auckland. The proposed gift, first conveyed to Auckland in 1872, was conditional upon a public library being established in the city. Thus inspired, and with vigorous prodding from other quarters, the city fathers accepted responsibility for the library of the Auckland Mechanics' Institute, and the city's free public library was declared officially open on 7 September 1880.

Sir George Grey confirmed his gift on 19 August 1882. The early printings and books, including many New Zealand rarities, were not fully appreciated until later scholars and librarians declared them to be a collection of exceptional quality and value. As the pages of this history explain.

Not only did Grey's benefaction place rare treasures and important early books in the library but it inspired many more citizens, businesses and institutions to make similar gifts in the years to come.

Equally important, the gift so enhanced the status of the library in the hearts and minds of citizens that the library system, the largest municipal library system in New Zealand and Australia, has never failed to be a matter of civic pride.

It is appropriate that *The Governor's Gift*, recording the first century of the Auckland city libraries, should be written by the present Deputy Librarian, Wynne Colgan. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate him on a handsome and most readable volume.

Sir Dove-Myer Robinson
Mayor of Auckland

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1

THE SEVENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

PROUD AS HE WAS, Mayor Thomas Peacock would have liked to ask all of Auckland's 16,000 people to the opening of the free public library that mild September evening in 1880. Quite simply, though, the old Mechanics' Institute could barely hold the 300 he had invited. Some of the citizens scorned the occasion, anyway. The more frivolous-minded were already dressing for the comedy *Baby Baby* at the Theatre Royal. Down in the Waitemata Hotel by the Queen Street Wharf, the Non-Society Shipwrights' Association had taken over the lounge for a meeting to oppose compulsory unionism. That had driven some of the regular drinkers up to the Metropolitan on the Fort Street corner. There, between beers, the talk was of W.G. Grace's recent 152 for England against Australia in London, and the latest demonstration led by the Maori prophet, Te Whiti, at Parihaka.

Waiting at the door of the institute on the rise above High Street, Tom Peacock remembered the old saying about a silk purse and a sow's ear. He knew that the building the *New Zealand Herald* had witheringly referred to as "that lingering decrepitude" was not going to be transformed overnight, merely by being re-named the Auckland Public Library. However, it would not be his fault if the evening were not a success. Like the good scientific instrument-maker he was, he had painstakingly planned and supervised the arrangements. The night before, a team of labourers had set about decorating the ageing weather-boarded building. Gratings and mats were laid at the entrance to take the mud from the boots of the gentlemen and their wives. The exterior gas lamp had been lighted, although it had to be admitted it barely illuminated the gathering darkness of the nasty corner the cabs would have to negotiate outside Porter's in High Street. Two handsome umbrella stands were in position in the vestibule – not that they would be needed this evening. Pot plants and bouquets of spring flowers were in profusion, greenery and strings of variegated flags hung from the ceiling and around the walls. Even the books had not been forgotten. There they were, impressive in their uniform bindings of green and brown, neatly aligned by the new librarian, Mr Shillington, on shelves between the windows: Dickens and Scott, Lytton and Marryat, Trollope and George Eliot, Bronte and Meredith, Thackeray and Bulwer. Tea was already on the tables, awaiting only the pronouncing of grace by Bishop Cowie at 6.30. Mrs Wilson had arrived to sing "Alice Where Art Thou?" and Mr Gooch, "The Goodwin Sands". Soon,

too, the Artillery Band would be along to play "The Pride of Scotland" and "The True Love Waltz".

The Mayor hoped Sir Maurice O'Rorke would keep his remarks brief. Dr Purchas and Dr Wallis, also, for that matter. Wallis, at least, would not be pompous. Oratory did not come easily to Tom Peacock, but he had his speech well prepared. First, he must remember to apologise for the absence of Sir Hercules Robinson. The retiring governor had hoped to attend the conversazione before boarding the S.S. *Rotomahana* for the trip to Australia. Unfortunately, the vessel had had to sail with the tide an hour or so earlier. He would have to remind his audience, too, how other mechanics' institutes had shared the fate of Auckland's.

No need, of course, to harp on how it came to be in such poor shape financially. Enough to say that the institute had asked the city council for help. And, when it failed to get that help, how it had been agreed to hand over the institute to the council. Finally, how the council had moved quickly towards opening the first free public library in New Zealand. He must stress, as well, the fact that the old building would be used only until a more convenient site could be found and a more suitable library put up. That was why he would have welcomed the appearance tonight of Sir George Grey. It was a pity that the old man, tired after the long parliamentary session in Wellington, had decided to go straight on by steamer to his beloved Kawau Island. More than once in the last few years "The Governor" had spoken of donating a collection of books to a public library if one were ever established in Auckland.

And that reminded Mr Peacock that library service in the city was not really beginning that night of 7 September 1880. As Arthur Purchas, the president of the institute, kept reminding him, that had happened nearly 40 years ago. As indeed it had . . .

2

AUCKLAND IN 1841

IN THE YEAR 1841 there was plenty to occupy the day of the working man in Auckland. There were roads to be levelled, swamps to be filled, cottages to be put up, horses to be shod, land tilled, flour milled and bread baked. And already repairs were needed on the footbridge over the creek in lower Queen Street, a rickety structure which some immigrant in a moment of nostalgia had dubbed "Waterloo". The town of some

James Fagan captioned his 1853 lithograph "Emigrants' Farewell" or "The Lord be with you!" Parting was no sweet sorrow for families facing the uncertainty of life in an unknown land, 12,000 miles from Britain. Auckland Public Library

1,500 people was less than a year old. Sir John Logan Campbell in *Poenamo* described it as "a handful of houses and a handful of people only, all peeping out at each other from amongst the scrub and six-feet high fern all around." Selecting the area as capital of the colony in 1840, Governor William Hobson had, in gratitude, named it in honour of George Eden, Lord Auckland. It had been Lord Auckland who, as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1834, had secured Hobson his first command of a Royal Navy vessel in over six years. Many of the town's early settlers had gained experience of a kind in Australia or elsewhere in New Zealand, and had been attracted to Auckland with the idea of rising in importance with the district. Newcomers were welcomed as likely to provide labour and improve the prospects of the settlements. There had been "mechanics" – skilled tradesmen or people who earned their living with their hands – in Auckland from almost the beginning of the colony. In December 1840 the *Chelydra* had brought upwards of 40 migrants, "for the most part 'mechanics', there being so far as I can remember not a single farmer in the lot".[1]

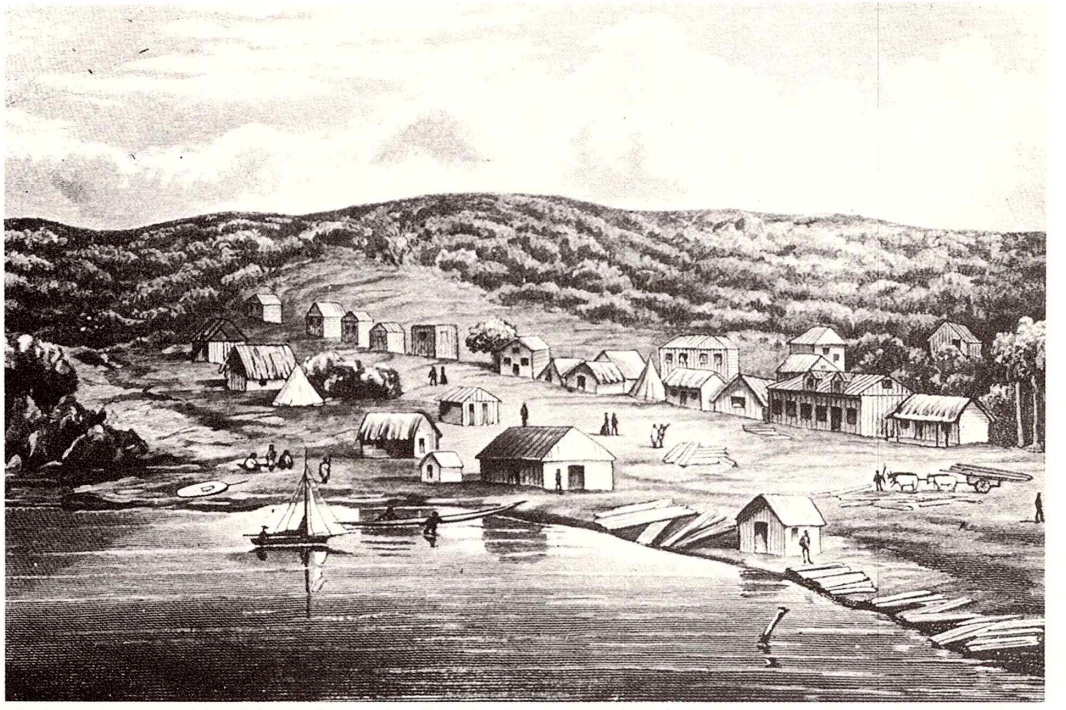
It was enough for many when the week's work was done to look forward to the occasional race-meeting about five kilometres out on the road to the eventual suburb

of Epsom, which was named after the English horse-racing locality. And, in the evenings, there were the Yew Tree Inn, the Governor Hobson, the Rising Sun and a dozen other grog-shops to help a man forget he was a world away from "home". The select few had their social entertainments from time to time at Government House, up on the hill that the Maoris called "Rangipuke", and the Pakehas called Princes Street; on the Waitemata harbour aboard John Blackett's 80 tonne clipper yacht, *Albatross*; at a garden party in St George's Bay; or attending a soiree with the officers of the 80th Regiment (South Staffordshire) camped on Pt Britomart. One amenity, very much a part of their lives in England and Scotland, was lacking – the mechanics' institute.

Thus it was that in July of 1841 – in the same week as correspondents to the *Auckland Standard* were urging the building of a post office worthy of the town, and the Roman Catholics were setting about raising money for their church – an advertisement in the *Auckland Chronicle* called those settlers interested in the establishment of such an institute to a meeting in the schoolhouse on 14 July. That gathering had resulted in a lecture and in an appeal for donations of books, charts and specimens for a proposed library and museum. Another year would pass, however, before the opening of the institute which was the forerunner of the Auckland Public Library.

At a further meeting on 27 July 1842, it was resolved that a "Mechanics' Institute on the Principals (sic) of the Institution in London would be of great benefit to the Mechanics of Auckland." A provisional committee of ten was elected, a public meeting planned and to be held within 14 days, and the motion carried that "as soon as this society has fifty members it be considered formed." The *Auckland Standard* of 11 August reported "a numerous and highly-respectable meeting" held on the previous Sunday evening in the Exchange Hotel in Shortland Crescent (later Street), which was at this time the town's main thoroughfare. It gave him pleasure, said the chairman, C.B. Brewer, barrister-at-law, "to perceive so many influential gentlemen present who take an interest in the improvement of the working classes (hear! hear! and cheers). The Institute has had for its sole purpose the instruction of the working classes by means of schools of various descriptions when lectures will be given by gentlemen of ability." Mr Brewer then turned to a topic which moved his audience of some 150 to greatest applause; "A library will be formed, and I am happy to say that at the present moment the Institute has the promise of 400 books." The meeting of 15 August, held again in Mr William Hart's Exchange Hotel, saw prospective members readily paying over their five shillings entrance fee, John Kitchen appointed secretary-librarian, a committee of 15 elected, of whom nine had to be "practical mechanics", and the rules for the institute and the library adopted: ("All members shall be entitled to discuss any matter or deliver lectures of any description, subject to the approval of the Committee, with the exception of Political and Theological Topics, the penalty for the breach of this rule to be expulsion from the Institute").

Prominent among the institute's "first 15", were five who could in no way be



"This is how Auckland looked shortly after the first town sale of allotments on 19 April, 1841, when every person was building his first house" – from the manuscript reminiscences of John Logan Campbell. The building with the two dormer windows (centre right) was owned by the general merchants, Nathan and Joseph. Artist unknown. From a newspaper engraving after a drawing in Campbell's reminiscences.

described as "mechanics". They were Dr John Logan Campbell, who would come to be known as "the father of Auckland", and his merchant partner, William Brown; Dr A.S. Martin; C.W. Ligar, the Surveyor-General; and Henry Falwasser who, in a couple of weeks would start publishing the *Auckland Times*, and would have to print 30 consecutive issues in a mangle when the government suppressed his paper for some six months.

Members were shown the design and ground plan for the permanent rooms of the institute; it was resolved that Lieutenant George A. Bennett, commanding the Royal Engineers, be invited to become the first president; and agreed that Mr Ligar should deliver the inaugural lecture. This duly took place in Shortland Crescent in the store belonging to Messrs Hoggard and Pollen. Their premises, like those of Brown and Campbell, and the Exchange Hotel, were to be a venue for meetings and lectures until the institute came by a home of its own.

Within the month, and wanting to open the library as quickly as possible, the institute rented a cottage at the corner of Chancery and O'Connell Streets, owned by one W. Cruickshank. Though it was off the flat, it was accessible by a road of kinds, "so dry

as to incur little damage to the books from rains,"[2] and far enough away from other buildings as to be in not much danger from the fires that were to destroy so many of Auckland's early wooden buildings. Here, on 30 September 1842, the library of the Mechanics' Institute opened. It was just as well that there were only about a hundred or so financial members, because the books added up to about the same number. Clearly, the committee would need to do more than urge "the importance of contributions, however small, to swell the number of books in the library". If only because, in the space of one day in the month ahead, the population of Auckland would go close to doubling itself.

3

THE FIRST TWO SHIPS

"AUCKLAND WAS A QUEER WEE TOWN when we arrived there in 1842. The houses were few and built of wood or Rahapou [Raupo], very frail tenements indeed – The tide made its way up Queen Street by two different creeks – one of these went in by what is now the Bank of New Zealand, and a few large Pohoutukaw [Pohutukawa] Trees stood where the back wall of the bank now stands – the other creek up Queen Street in what was called Ligar's Canal and the tide went up as far as the corner of Windham [Wyndham Street] thru the property of Mr Goodfellow, baker, and who was in the habit of bringing his firewood up the creek in punts to his door."[3] That was how Peter McDonald writing in 1876 from Kawau Island, remembered his introduction to New Zealand. With his wife and three young children, he had huddled in the Printing and Post Office in High Street, an umbrella held above their heads all night, "and the rain coming through the roof in torrents".[4]

That was on 9 October, the day that swelled the population of Auckland by some 571 when the *Duchess of Argyle* and the *Jane Gifford* made landfall nearly 15 weeks out from Scotland. Both ships had sailed from Greenock, the port of Glasgow, which was itself the home of the mechanics' institute movement. The McDonalds were aboard the *Jane Gifford*. They came from Glasgow. As Peter McDonald's diary tells us, many of the migrants were from nearby Paisley, whose people he thought "a rather intelligent class, although they may perhaps be a little old-fashioned in their ways or antiquated in their ideas."[5] McDonald was less starry-eyed about other fellow migrants. "They were composed", he wrote, "of the debris of several emigration Societies which had existed for

The arrival in Auckland in October 1842 of the two emigrant ships *Duchess of Argyle* and *Jane Gifford*. Between them they brought more than 570 people to the new colony. Their voyage from Greenock in Scotland had taken fifteen weeks. A reconstruction painted by Capt M. T. Clayton in oil, 1980.
Auckland Public Library

some time in that part of the old country. Individuals were appointed by these Societies who travelled over the country in order to collect subscriptions in behalf of the emigration schemes – considerable sums were thus collected but how or by what means these funds were distributed or apportioned among the members we never could properly learn . . . There was likewise a kind of depot formed in the Town of Paisley where clothing of all kinds were received for the use of the migrants." [6]

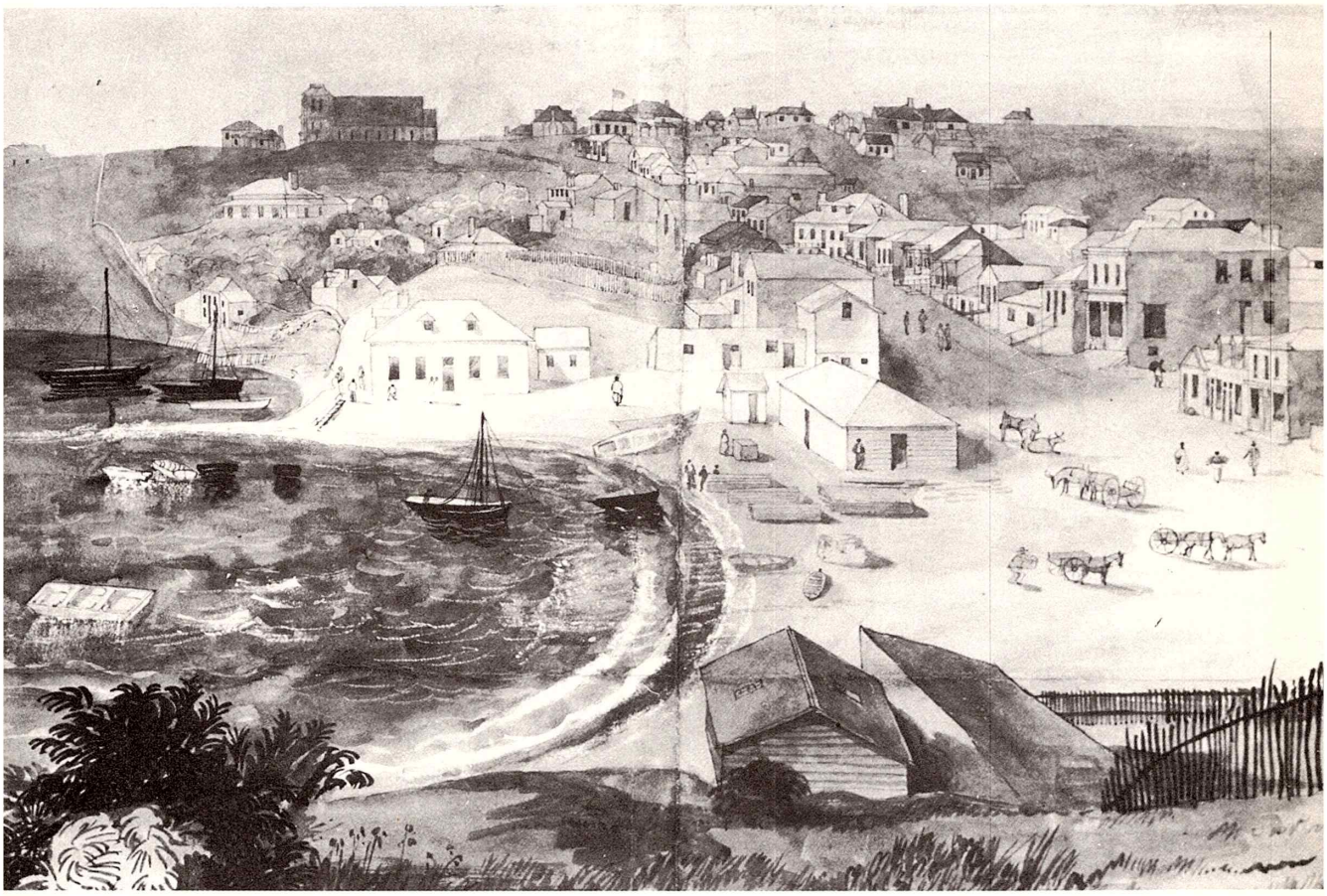
Peter McDonald wrote largely out of recollection and at the remove of some 34 years. He told of sea-sickness, illness and death (17 children died on the *Jane Gifford* and eight were born), and of a weekly sprinkling of chloride of lime "that sent over the whole ship a healthful and pleasant feeling". [7]

Robert Graham, whose home, Ellerslie, had been at Lambhill near Glasgow, was also on the *Jane Gifford*. He was to become Superintendent of the Auckland Province, a member of parliament, a pioneer in the tourist industry, and the man who laid out the Ellerslie Gardens. Robert Graham kept a diary of the voyage. Dancing in the evening, he reported, "is capital exercise on board the ship whose people have nothing to do . . . Mr McNair formed the children into classes to day he teaches the boys and a Miss Adam the girls. There are great many book 'sclates' [slates] for their use. There are also a library for the passengers." History does not, unfortunately, record the size or contents of that library. Fighting broke out between two women whom Graham described as "not of the most refined description . . . there are some of them the filthiest class of people I ever beheld." The Sabbath was little different from other days, "the whole of the cabin passengers spending the greater part of Sunday reading religious books". [8]

And so they came to their promised land – Andrew and Cameron, Darroch and Finlay, Laurie and McBrierty, McIntosh and Meechan, Muir and Wallace. Disappointments were many. Their welcome was the mud-flat of Mechanics Bay from which, dropped literally bag and baggage, they had to find their way as best they could to the 20 or 30 rough huts provided for them. They probably thought little of their new home. In London, however, *The Times* praised their "patient, cheerful and exemplary disposition as they set about their various tasks"; the Allisons and the Bruces, the Donalds and the Jamiesons, the McEwans and the McCluskies, the Scotts and the Sims, carpenters, shoemakers, sawyers, tailors and bakers, female domestic servants, seamstresses, housewives and mothers. All thrown together in a town in which, as Robert Graham recalls, "the first stop is a grog shop, the next Mr McLennan's the store, the next a shoemakers, the next a bakers, then a grog shop and then a pork stand and a grog shop etc. etc. I should say that upon the average there is one grog shop for every three of all the other trades put together." [9]

Most of the new arrivals were pleased to put all thought of the voyage behind them. Some were doubtless in the audience in the Exchange Hotel a week or so later to hear James Thompson, who had been the doctor on the *Duchess*, give a lecture for the Mechanics' Institute. Had he been there, Graham would surely have found interest in the topic; "The physiological superiority of the female brain." The chances were, though, that he was even then negotiating the charter of the *Black Hawk*, loading it with merchandise and preparing to sail for Kororareka in the Bay of Islands.

In the winter that lay ahead a handful of the new arrivals would toil up what, in another dozen years, would come to be called Constitution Hill, from their modest, weather-boarded cottages in Mechanics Bay, and down again into the area of Commercial Bay for the series of debates arranged by the institute. The first; "Whether theatrical or stage representations tend towards the immorality of the present" (the decision was that "theatrical or stage representation and the exhibition of Shakespeare plays had no immoral tendency"). The second; "Whether celibacy or marriage is most conducive to



West view of Commercial Bay, the principal water frontage of the city of Auckland in 1843. Pen and wash drawing by Edward Ashworth in the Auckland City Art Gallery. Shortland Crescent (later Street) runs from right foreground to Princes Street, with original St Paul's Anglican church on skyline and the post office and the area of government to its right. The Auckland Mechanics' Institute is concealed behind the large building right of centre. Auckland City Art Gallery

happiness" (the verdict was that to be single was to be happier). The third debate in the series was more in line with the avowed lofty ideals of the institute; "Whether steam machinery has been prejudicial or otherwise to the working class." "By acclamation it was carried in the negative, especially as being instrumental in throwing operatives out of employment." [10] The small audience on that occasion was made up of the residents of Official Bay and the more distant suburb of Parnell. Inevitably though, and once spoken for by two members, "mechanics" in modest number did join the institute and carry home for reading by the light of candles, titles like James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, Frederick Marryat's *Masterman Ready*, Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque*

and Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge*. In due course, and like the more noteworthy William Hart, Dr Martin, the Rev John Churton and Alex Dingwall, they would be asked to help with the erection of a permanent hall for the institute. Rather than contribute in cash, they most likely offered their labour in lieu of subscription for the first quarter. Building began in October 1843, and early in the following year the institute moved a few metres from its cottage to new premises in what was still little more than a large room. It lay roughly athwart present day Courthouse Lane, opposite the Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Memorial Hall.

4

HARD TIMES

"LIBRARIANS" (custodians would have been a better name) came and went in quick succession. Four held the post in the first three years. One, when he left, increased the meagre bookstock with a volume each of Pindar's *Poems*, Howitt's *History of Priestcraft*, Cook's *Voyages*, Watson's *Philip the Second*, and *The Works of Pope*. Enter, next, in November 1845 and in answer to a request to serve as honorary secretary-librarian, Charles Terry, "earnestly hoping to contribute to the intellectual, as well as moral advancement of our fellow settlers".[11] His plausibility proved to be exceeded only by his taking ways. Within six months of his appointment, it was recorded that "the Secretary, Mr Charles Terry, having left the Colony carrying with him the Minutes of the Committee Meetings between present date and that of January 2 last, the proceedings of the Mechanics' Institute are thus lost, as also certain funds being entrance and subscription fees which he failed to hand over to the Treasurer before his sudden departure."[12] Mr Terry was not to be the last of his office to depart under something of a cloud.

For the next few years, however, the institute and its library managed well enough. The Total Abstinence Society held meetings in its hall, as did the Association for the Suppression of Intemperates, and groups formed to push for the setting up of a lunatic asylum and a society to supply cheap bread to the public. The Wesleyan congregation were allowed use of the premises for a public day school, the artist Edward Ashworth lectured on Grecian architecture, and "Phrenology" was the subject of a talk by William Brown. And even though the library still held fewer than 500 volumes, the inevitable cry of "We've read them all!" had still to be heard. Most of the books continued to be

donated, very few bought. Periodicals such as *Chambers's Journal*, *Blackwood's*, *Punch* and *The Illustrated London News* arrived irregularly in ships from overseas, along with horse-hair mattresses, wines in wood, Rowland's Macassar oil and gingham and regatta shirts.

The year 1845 was to bring hard times for the institute. Both the entrance and subscription fees were lowered; gentlemen approached as prospective lecturers increasingly found reasons not to be able to do so; a concert planned to boost funds was abandoned when the governor, Captain FitzRoy, let it be known among the residents of Official Bay (the now-reclaimed area below the Supreme Court which Sir John Logan Campbell had nicknamed "Exclusion Bay"), that he and his lady would not be attending. Within a year, and as "permanent" residents began withholding their patronage "through feelings of superiority", an editorial in *The New Zealander* grumbled that the institute was in a state of death-like indifference, and wondered whether a "good secretary might improve matters". [13] The sickness that was ultimately to carry off the institute had already set in, though the patient would linger on for another 34 years. Upwards of 15 gentlemen would fill the combined post of secretary-librarian between 1846 and 1880. Probably none of them could be described as "good", if good were to mean "efficient". Like any other organisation, the institute would get only what it was prepared to pay for. And, in truth, the institute paid very little.

The decade 1846 to 1856 was not one of progress. The occasional woolstapler, stonecutter, leatherworker, blacksmith and saw-trimmer joined. "Mechanics" continued, however, to be outnumbered by "gentlemen" and "merchants", among whom the more well-known included Frederick Whitaker, who would be premier in 1863; Reader Wood, the architect; John Williamson, proprietor of the newspaper the *New Zealander* and later Superintendent of the Auckland Province; William Crush Daldy, master mariner and first chairman of the Auckland Harbour Board; and P.A. Philips, who was to become mayor for three years from 1871 and town clerk for a further 25. In 1850 the artist P.J. Hogan was retained to give lessons in etching, watercolours and architectural plan drawing. Until, that was, attendances over the next year made it "not worth the cost of lighting the room, let alone pay him". In the same year, his fellow-artist, Charles Heaphy, turned up on a stormy night prepared to give his lecture on "Discoveries in Astronomy". He found that Aucklanders had read the weather signs so well as to stay away in such numbers that the address was cancelled. Indeed by 1856 every class had been a total failure and all had been discontinued. In 1853, for example, only two lectures had been delivered, the Independent Order of Oddfellows and the Independence Congregation had each found rooms of their own, and nothing had been spent on the library.

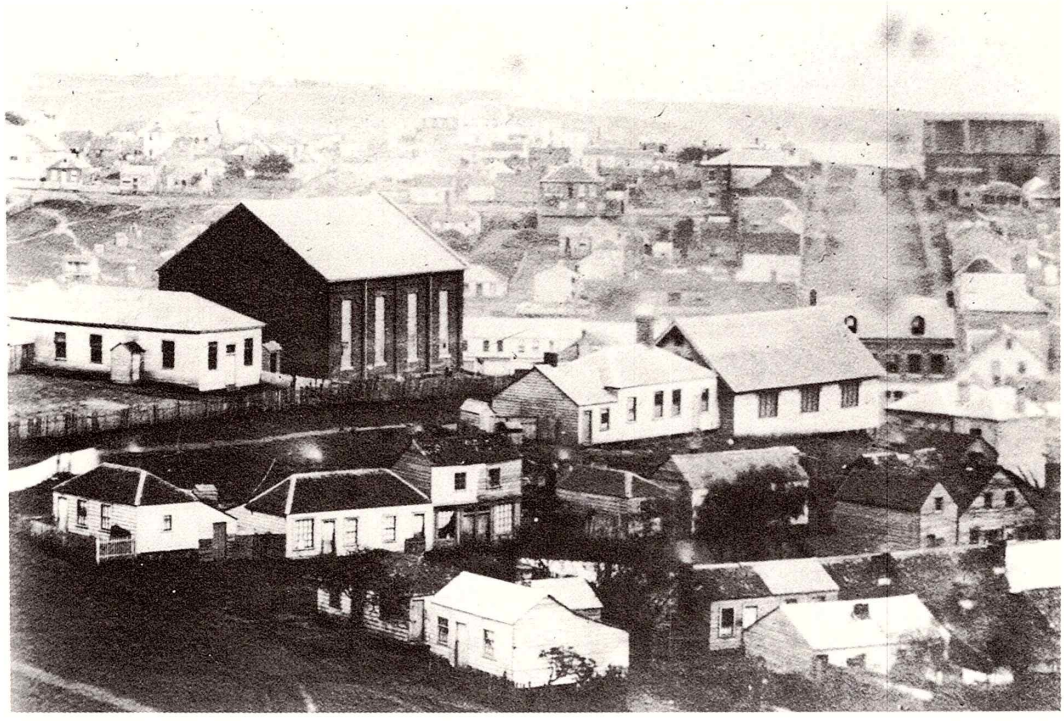
The odd bargain in books was still to be picked up. Instructed to attend Ridings and Connell's auction rooms in Queen Street and "buy anything by Charles Dickens that might be put up for sale", the librarian did well. He came back with not only a copy

of *Martin Chuzzlewit* for 12/6d, Bulwer's *England and the English* (three shillings), and *Poor Jack* by Marryat (a bargain at ten shillings), but also Lady Morgan's *Book of the Boudoir* (three shillings and sixpence). He was even able to persuade his superiors to recoup a shilling or two on books already in the library, but for which there was apparently no demand; among them were Simpson's *Euclid*, a volume on the diseases of sheep, and *Enquiries of an Emigrant* (who apparently had Canada in mind).

The continuing refusal of "practical mechanics" to involve themselves in committee work, let alone become members, led to the annual report of 1854 wondering whether "amusement may not have been sufficiently blest with information, entertainment with knowledge and the light with the grave. It may not have been sufficiently sought to inform their minds with or through the gratification of the senses." Thus, playing chess or draughts was to be allowed as bait "for young men engaged in commercial pursuits who have not family circles in which to pass their leisure hours." Dancing, however, (except on the birthday of the Queen) continued to be frowned on until 1860 when "a modest amount" of it was recommended for inclusion in musical festivals. This would boost finances and provide "a source of rational and social amusement especially during the winter months." [14]

The institute was also to be open for refreshments; tea or coffee at threepence (three cents) a cup, bread and butter or a biscuit at threepence, and ginger beer at threepence and lemonade at sixpence (five cents). Patrons would have to eat standing up; when the Oddfellows went, they took their chairs with them. That meant asking the trustees of the Scotch Church (St Andrew's beyond Government House) if they had any spare forms. The minutes are silent as to the result of the enquiry. For the institute, the one ray of light in the gloom that otherwise enveloped it in the years to 1856 was the promise (in 1853) by its patron, Governor Sir George Grey, to look into the matter of finding it a new and more convenient site. The rub was that Grey was then on the point of quitting the colony at the end of his first governorship. It would be another eight years before he was back.

Spirits rose briefly with the summer of 1856. The new hall (18 metres by nine metres), for which the Provincial Council had made a grant of £300 ($600) and the public had contributed £140 ($280), was opened. Now there was a hall, a "commodious news room", two classrooms and a chess room, and an apartment with "reasonable firing and lighting" for the librarian. The bookstock was nudging 1,000, annual issues had climbed to about 1,800 among some 150 borrowers, and the popularity of the library was being referred to in the annual reports as "an unmistakable index of the healthy tone existing in the Institute". [15] Some notable names among the townsfolk appeared for the first time as members: merchants like David Nathan and J.C. Firth; R.H. Wynyard, twice acting-Governor of the Colony; and James Dilworth, the philanthropist who would found a school in Auckland for "boys who were destitute orphans or children of parents in straitened circumstances". Ships' captains were to have free use of the reading room



An 1857 photograph of the three wooden buildings making up the Auckland Mechanics' Institute, centre and to the right of the dominant Wesleyan chapel in brick. The view is west towards Ponsonby, with the sweep of Victoria Street West on the right. Auckland Public Library

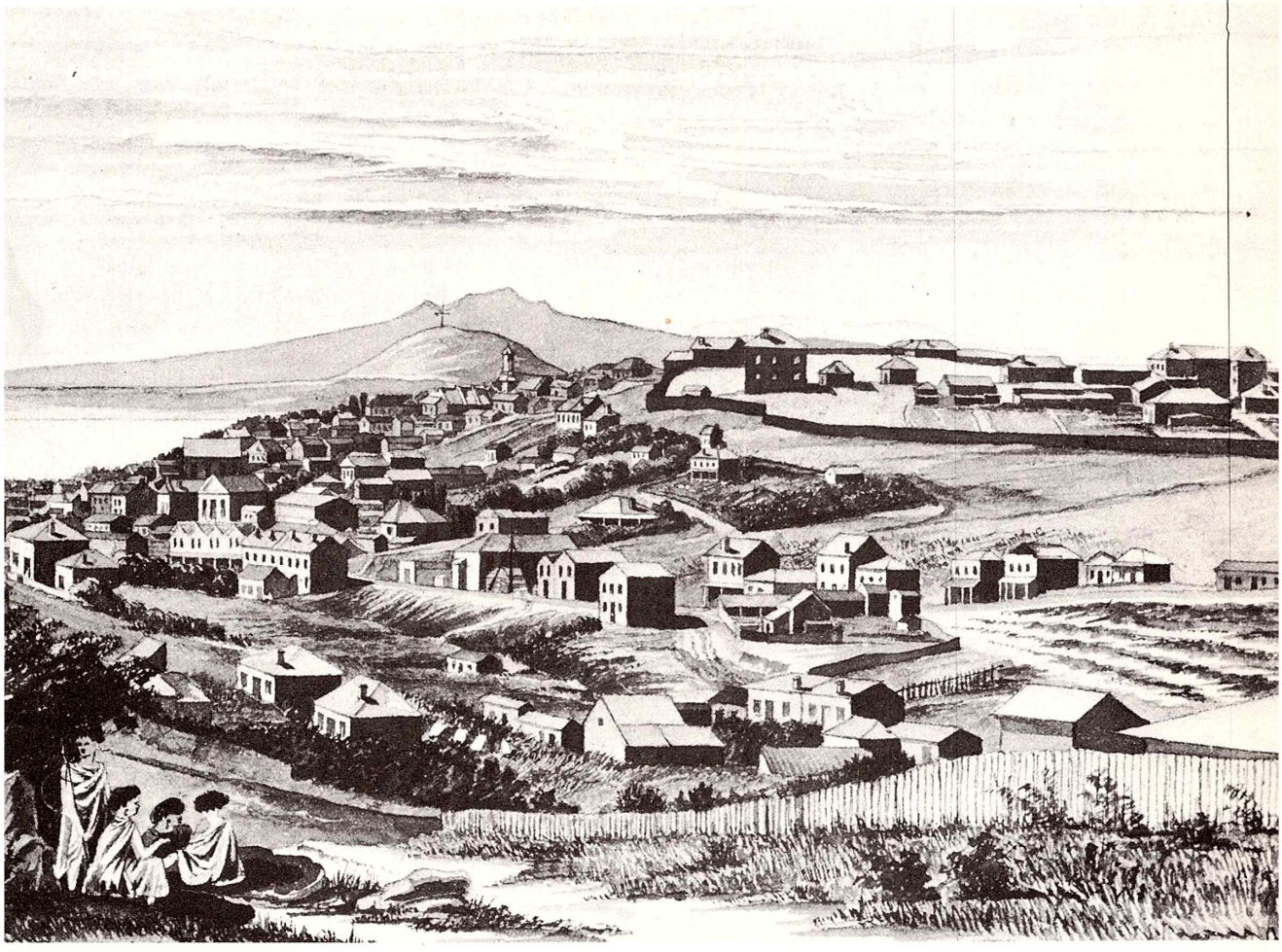
while in port, and all immigrants, once spoken for by a member, could also have free use of the room. There, at the remove of some months, they could follow happenings in the old country, as reported in the pages of *The Times*, the *Leeds Mercury*, the *Dublin Warder* and the *Economist*. The rules of the library were posted on the walls, and "Perfect Silence" and "No Refreshments" were literally the orders of the day. When it came to borrowing books, it was one week for octavo size or smaller, and two for quarto or folio. Such limitations, however, apparently meant little to the Rev John Kinder, the autocratic headmaster of the Church of England Grammar School and a watercolourist of note – of whom pupils were said to chant "Between Kinder and kinder there differs no letter / but if Kinder were kinder then school would be better!" Having borrowed *Little Dorrit* and kept it well beyond the due date for return (whether for class use or not was never made clear) he was reminded, reprimanded for his oversight, and promptly resigned his membership.

The brave talk about the health of the institute was mostly camouflage. Within the building, water was coming in on the books, and members were heard to protest that they did not want to have to read yet again *The Deerslayer*, *Adam Bede* or Samuel Smiles's

Self Help. The management committee pondered whether, with the 58th Regiment moving out, it might be possible to get hold of their library. It seems that it was not. Outside, the firewood kept disappearing and the fence continued to be broken down. For all that, it was decided not to risk a quarrel with the neighbours from whom water had to be borrowed in times of drought. The institute's own well was down to 18 metres in the early 1860s but so, too, was the membership in a period of emigration from Auckland and of threatened war with the Maoris. Worse for the reputation of the institute, was the suggestion of possible moral corruption of a "good number of very young boys" [16] who were said to change their books nearly every day, sometimes twice. One can only surmise what the titles may have been. Clough's *Amours de Voyage*, Mrs Gaskell's *Round the Sofa*, Boyd's *Recreations of a Country Parson*?

To restore flagging fortunes the begging approach began. They went to publishers for free copies of books – without success. To prominent citizens to become members – the reaction of the manager of the Oriental Bank was that there were "other institutions much more worthy of support. Good morning!" To the proprietors of the four local papers for a free copy – "Except for one, since defunct, no one condescended even to reply." To Colonel Leslie of the 40th Regiment for a band to play at a proposed soiree – "He never deigned to acknowledge the communication." And as if boys and men were not enough to have to be bothered with, there were the beasts too. Pigs rooted around and knocked a hole in the main entry door, and dogs lay in the reading room "creating both a stench in the hot room and the probability of an invasion of fleas". The remarkable thing was that James Boyle, who was appointed secretary-librarian in 1856, was the one who lasted longest in the job, more than four years.

By the early 1860s it had become clear as the institute staggered from crisis to crisis – most of them financial – that it was really the library alone that kept it going. The only source of income was the fees paid by no more than 500 members, plus uncertain handouts from the Auckland Provincial Council, small returns from social or musical evenings and the occasional lecture. The eminent Austrian geologist, Ferdinand von Hochstetter delivered, in 1859, what must have been the best-attended talk ever given in the institute. A thankful committee awarded him honorary life membership. Other prominent men about town who joined up included the botanist Thomas Cheeseman; lawyer Edward Hesketh; George Partington, a member of the family operating a flour-mill whose turning sails were to remain Auckland's best-known landmark until 1950; and the Baron de Thierry. Charles Philip Hippolytus de Thierry was the eccentric dreamer who declared himself King of Nukahiva in the mid-Pacific and who, in 1837, had landed at the Hokianga in an attempt to found a colony in what he called his "sovereign chieftaincy" of New Zealand. In 1863, the year before his death, he was one of 24 unsuccessful applicants for the post of librarian to the institute. De Thierry's manuscript, *An Historical Account of an Attempt to Colonise New Zealand* can be seen in the Grey Collection of the Auckland Public Library.



Auckland showing Albert Barracks 1859. The site of the Auckland Public Library that would be opened in 1887 lies just to the right of the centre of the painting in front of the barracks wall. The Auckland Mechanics' Institute is obscured by the Wesleyan chapel, the steep-roofed building left, with roofline edging into the white of the harbour. Watercolour by Andrew Robertson.

Auckland City Art Gallery

Members were probably relieved in 1860 that their building stood in comparative isolation. In July the dreaded cry of "Fire!" rang through the ante-room of the library. The flames were put out without too much trouble, and Mrs Corlett's concert was able to proceed. It took their minds back, however, to the blaze of only two years before, which had started in the nearby Osprey Inn in High Street and ultimately razed more than 50 shops and houses.

Ironically, the New Zealand wars in 1863 came as something of a blessing to the

institute. When it was feared that the Waikato Maoris were on the point of attacking Auckland, the hall and its adjacent rooms were offered to the military as a hospital at a rental of three guineas a week. As it turned out, General Cameron and his forces had no need of the facilities, but the revenue to the institute was more in three months than it had been in the previous nine. It helped towards the installation of gas-lighting in 1866. And that must have pleased old Mr Abbott. For years he had been complaining about the smell in the library from the paraffin lamp which, he insisted, "seizes hold of my chest and will very soon damage my lungs". The income also made possible the buying by the librarian of two dozen large bricks and a little mortar to make a hearth in his kitchen since, as he reported, it was a "tie" between himself and the rats who would hold possession.

The transfer of the seat of government to Wellington in 1865, and the lure of gold on the Coromandel Peninsula in 1867 cut further into membership and, thus, into funds. One librarian left when his annual salary was reduced from £100 to £75 ($200 to $150). A successor was appointed, but without the immediate prospect of pay. Tardiness to meet accounts led not only to a threat from the gas company to cut off supply but also, and more importantly, to a stiff letter from the library's suppliers in London advising that they would stop sending books until they received remittances sufficient to cover current expenses as well as pay off a balance due. Their account was duly settled, and the local firm of J.H. Upton appointed as buying agent.

The institute began noticeably to give ground in the late 1860s. Auckland was by then a town of 8,000, and rivals to what the *Daily Southern Cross* was calling "that effete institution" were springing up. One was the YMCA with its series of courses held in the Music Hall close by. Another was Chapman's Subscription Library in Queen Street containing, as its advertisements boasted, "Upwards of 1,300 volumes, and being the largest and best-selected Public Library in the Colony." And, most persuasive of all, that perennial perverter of youthful morality, the theatre, was booming. What chance had the staid lecture on electro-biology or the well-thumbed, leather-bound volume of Walter Scott's *Old Mortality* or the files of *Cottage and Gardener* in the face of *The Female Gambler* and *The Bonnie Fishwife*, presented at the Prince of Wales Theatre under the "Distinguished Patronage of the Ladies of Auckland"?

It was in February 1870 that members of the institute first learnt officially of the Public Libraries Act passed in 1869 by the General Assembly in Wellington. It empowered authorities to establish public libraries, provided that admission to them was free. The committee considered the institute to be ideal as the nucleus of such a library. It still had a decade of life left to it, though events were beginning to quicken towards its ultimate collapse. In the Provincial Council of 1871, there was a call to the City Board of Commissioners to interest themselves in the matter of the proposed free public library. Being on the point of changing their status to city councillors, the 10 gentlemen concerned resolved to hold the matter over.

5

THE BENEFACTOR POINTS THE WAY

LATE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR, Sir George Grey, in retirement on Kawau Island between his second governorship (1861-1868) and the time when he would be briefly Premier (1877-1879), let it be known that he would be willing to donate books should a public library be established in Auckland. And, stung by revelations in the press as to how badly the library of the Auckland Mechanics' Institute compared with Dunedin's (a paltry 8,000 issues a year as against some 36,000), members called for the sale of their Chancery Street property, the buying or leasing of a site more central, and the establishment of a free library. They even drummed up a petition with more than 2,300 signatures, and placed it before parliament in Wellington for that purpose in 1873. From press and public alike the demand was becoming insistent. A meeting of citizens was called to discuss the topic in August 1875, but enthusiasm waned a little when it became clear that a free public library would involve a considerable amount of ratepayers' money. It was up to the *Daily Southern Cross*, however, to suggest to a reluctant city council the way to achieve what most Aucklanders obviously wanted – and needed. Why not, the paper urged in November 1876, consider establishing a free library "using the library of the now-defunct Auckland Provincial Council" [17] as a basis (the provinces had been abolished in the previous year)? It was an argument that was to gain strength in the forthcoming twelve months, when parliament debated a bill about the best way to dispose of the library of the Provincial Council. Speaking to the bill which he had himself introduced, Sir Maurice O'Rorke hinted that, if Auckland failed to adopt the Public Libraries Act of 1869, the Provincial Council library might go "elsewhere".

While the city council hesitated, the institute continued to go through at least the motions of appearing to want to extend its life. In June 1877 it requested financial help from the council. Aid was declined. It again asked 15 months later. Once more it was refused, on the grounds that the council had no power to grant money to an organisation not under its immediate control. There was no word, either, from the Waste Lands Board, to whom the institute had belatedly applied for a grant of land in a better location. And, in a year when water had been laid on to the hospital, the post office, the gaol and the lunatic asylum, the institute still had only its well. Clearly its time had come. Though whatever educational influence it had exercised had long since dis-

appeared, the institute had been the intellectual and social centre of the city and virtually its only meeting-place for nearly 38 years. Nobody could claim for it, as it was claimed for its counterparts in Britain, that "many a man who made his way in the world before free education became universally compulsory, owed much of his success to the Mechanics' Institute of his town."[18] Nor was the amount of good it did in providing reading for the masses "incalculable", as had been said of its British counterpart.[19] For all that, its library held the seeds of what, given time and careful nurturing, would grow into New Zealand's most widespread public library system.

On 2 April 1879 the institute formally requested the city council to take it over. The *Evening Star* was at its elbow to give the necessary nudge. "For the credit of Auckland, we hope that the proposal now under consideration for the transfer of the Mechanics' Institute to the City authority will be adopted. The condition of our only uncertain seat of literature is the subject of common satire among visitors from any civilised part of the world. It is without parallel anywhere, either in this or the neighbouring colonies of Wellington, Christchurch or Dunedin. Each has a Library worthy of the name. Auckland's is a disgrace to the city . . . The proposition is to hand over a property worth £1,500 at least, to the Corporation on the simple condition that the Institute will be carried on under the Public Libraries Act . . . by bringing this Act into operation the Council would fall heir to a very valuable reference library collected by the Provincial Council and more than probably some day to the rare collection gathered by Sir George Grey. Here, then, the City has within its grasp and at present the nucleus of one of those great institutions which have rendered some cities famous in history." And, finally, there was an open letter to the mayor, in late May of the same year, urging action on the adoption of the Act, a letter signed by no fewer than 54 prominent citizens, among them John Logan Campbell, William C. Daldy, L.D. Nathan, James Williamson, Charles Hesketh, Henry Brett, J.C. Sharland, Fred Whitaker, Alfred Buckland, George Chapman (the success of whose circulating library had certainly not helped the institute) and Upton and Company, the book suppliers to its library.

There remained only two things for the council to do. First, the ratepayers had to endorse its action at a poll. After all, there had been the lukewarm reception by those 40 citizens at the meeting back in 1875 . . .

Mayor Peacock need not have worried. No fewer than 728 were in favour of his proposal, and only 91 against. A short Act of Parliament was passed formally conveying the contents of the institute library (as well as that of the old provincial council) to the city council (some 6,000 volumes), and the city took over the old building in Chancery Street in December 1879.

That left only the striking of a rate in order to qualify for a subsidy from the government under the Public Libraries Act. Wasting no time the council in February 1880 struck a half-penny in the pound library rate which it was estimated would yield £350. The future of the Auckland Public Library was assured.

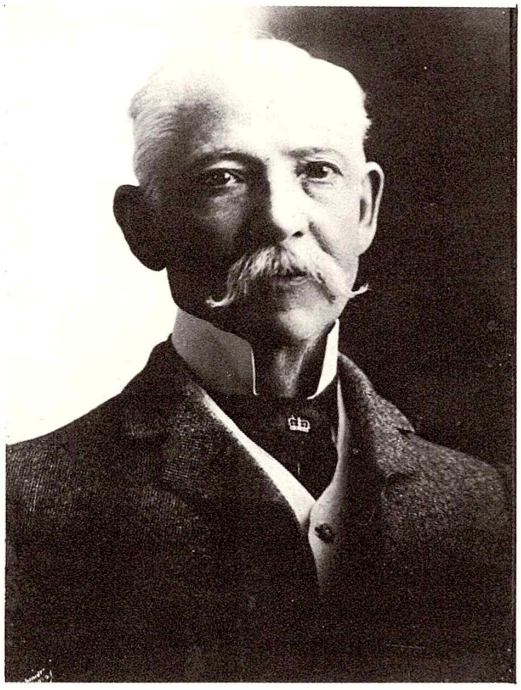
6

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OPENS ITS DOORS

NOT SURPRISINGLY, the first to sign the visitors' book at the conversazione on 7 September 1880 was Thomas Peacock. His thoughts on that occasion are to be found in newspaper accounts of the day. As also are those of Sir Maurice O'Rorke, beside whose speech, the *New Zealand Observer* commented "A funeral service would be like a screaming farce!" To be fair to Sir Maurice, however, he had been the driving force in 1878 behind the Government's creation of a £5,000 ($10,000) fund for pound for pound library subsidies. The impression of the citizens who swarmed the next day over the still-decorated old building were, of necessity, pithier than the official orations. When the library had been the institute's alone, visitors had been observing in the book; "Contains some good works, but much increasing trash" – "Very handy for the unemployed" – "Simply a disgrace!" or similar. Now, even though there were still the old and dilapidated books from the institute along with the several thousand neat and uniform volumes from the library of the provincial council, there was enough to suggest that there was reading for everyone.

As always with visitors' books, many people were content to enter; "Very pleasing" or some such remark. To a cook from Ponsonby, however, the library was "A workingman's gift;" to a printer from Grafton, "The most orderly and clean in the Colony." That must have pleased Mr Shillington, himself described by the *New Zealand Herald* as "Very courteous and attentive and likely to become popular." [20]

Edward Shillington had been selected two months earlier from no fewer than 42 applicants. So far as one can tell, only a handful of them had mixed much with books. The city council had sat in committee to reduce the list. Their task was made no easier by the fact that most of the applicants were unknown to them, and that many had good references. Finally, as the *New Zealand Herald* revealed, "The number was reduced to 18, when an ingenious idea was suggested for making a further reduction without giving rise to invidious distinctions. The situation would be given to a married man." [21] As the same newspaper tartly observed: "The Council, as a public body with the interest of the State at heart, evidently regretted that Sir Julius Vogel's great immigration scheme had been stopped and that, therefore, those who incurred the responsibilities of matrimony should be encouraged." [22] Mr Shillington had, as it happened, a wife and one child. He also came armed with excellent testimonials. He had been born in Belfast in 1835, spent



Edward Shillington, librarian of the Auckland Public Library (1880-1913).

21 years with the Royal Engineers and seen service in China. He arrived in New Zealand just in time to apply for the position.

When the city opened its free library with Shillington nominally its head, reading occupied a wider and more influential place in the leisure life of the community than at any time since. It was the heyday of the English novel. Dickens and Thackeray were a recent memory. George Eliot had still three months to live. Stevenson had yet to publish *Treasure Island*, and Mark Twain his *Huckleberry Finn*. In other spheres of literature, great and memorable figures continued to move upon the stage: Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, Walter Pater, Froude and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, Longfellow, Rossetti and Swinburne were still at work. It was a great age of English literature, and a reading public of all classes knew and appreciated its masterpieces. No one, however, expected the librarian to take part in the selection of books for the Auckland Public Library. That pleasant chore was entrusted to a small committee of citizens watched over by Thomas Peacock.

John Barr, Shillington's successor in 1913, remembered him as "A typical military man, whose aim was to see that visitors obeyed the rules." At £100 ($200) a year, he was about on the salary level of the turncock, whose job it was to switch on and off the water for the mains, and a little above that of the council messenger. A library rate of one half-penny in the pound was again struck in 1881, and a ladies' room completed with the necessary matting, portable wash stand with towel, glass, brush and comb. Soap

proved a problem. Night after night it disappeared. A cake of "Windsor" was particularly short-lived. Mr Shillington tried "Household". That went too. Correspondents to the press had all manner of helpful suggestions. "Chain it up as they used to do with the parish Bible," said one. "Put up a copy of the Ten Commandments in the lavatory, or adopt the Oddfellows' symbol, sketching a human eye on the wall above the soap dish," another wrote. More cakes of soap went missing in that first year than books. Mr Shillington admitted to only two volumes unaccounted for (both novels) and six newspapers. Out of a total bookstock of about 6,000, that must have seemed a reasonable casualty rate. On the whole, visitors conducted themselves well. He had to speak only twice in twelve months to "gentlemen" for spitting on the floor. On one occasion, as he recalled it, he had found a man concealed at night in the library. "I handed him over to the police and he received two months' imprisonment." [23]

Most of the fiction that Mr Shillington maintained guard over had come from the Mechanics' Institute. The most valuable contributions from the provincial council had been its many sets of official publications relating to New Zealand from the earliest days of settlement. They were the nucleus of the extensive collection which has always been a feature of the reference services of the Auckland Public Library. Of particular importance are the manuscript records of the provincial council, many of them ordered not to be printed and, therefore, possibly the only copies in existence. Enthusiasm for the library was infectious. In 1881, the new mayor, James McCosh Clark, donated a large portion of his honorarium to buy books for it, daily attendances climbed to some 300 ("though few young men go to the library for serious purposes"),[24] and Sunday opening was held to be a great success. It had not been achieved without struggle. The doubters seemed satisfied, however, by Mayor Clark's assurance that it would not be a desecration of the Sabbath to read the kind of books that were in the library. When even longer hours of opening were suggested, though, "the worthy custodian" (Shillington seemed to be more often known as that than as librarian) found a quick defender in a newspaper correspondent. "Why not have the library open all night and let the librarian sleep standing and attend Worship once a year?" [25] In recognition, perhaps, of the fact that he had now to be vigilant seven days of the week instead of six, the council raised his salary by £25 ($50). And, after months of complaining, he had the leaking roof over his living quarters repaired with galvanised iron of the least expensive kind.

What the enthusiasts were as yet unable to achieve was a lending department in the library. The council gave its agreement in principle, but decided the time was not yet ripe. Visitors would continue to take books from the shelves by consent of the librarian, and in his presence return them to the place from which they were taken. Letting readers put them back might be all very well for Bristol, as one city councillor told another, "But unless such a rule is made, the books would soon get into such confusion that no one would get the book he wanted." All ship-shape but, in this case hardly "Bristol-fashion," would obviously be the way Mr Shillington would have wanted it, too.

7

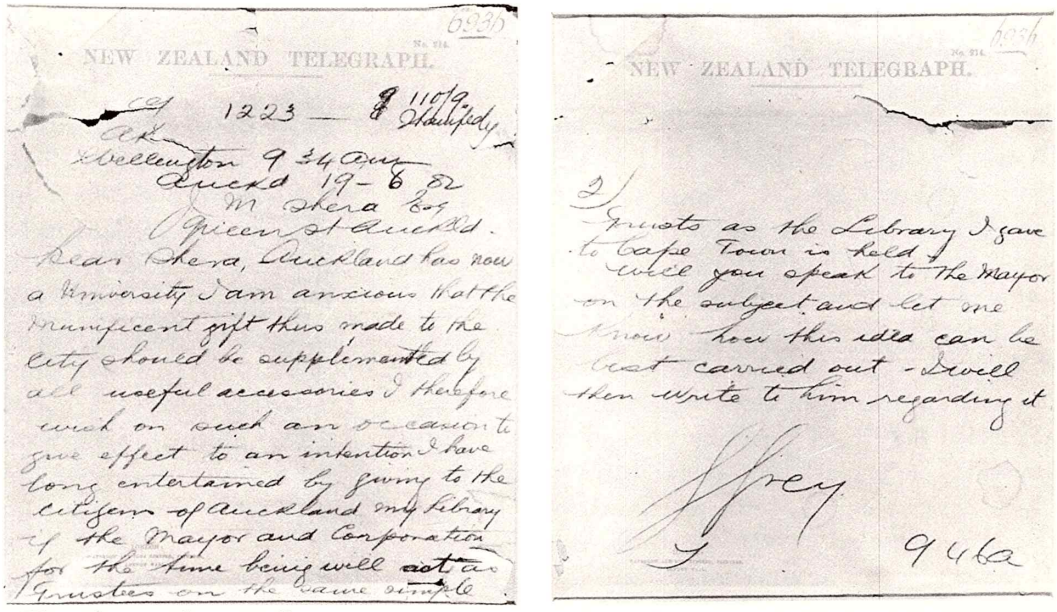
THE GOVERNOR'S GIFT

THE YEAR 1882 is remembered as the one in which the first consignment of frozen meat was sent from New Zealand to England. In the development of public library service in this country, it was also of considerable significance. On 19 August a telegram was sent from Wellington to James Shera, a stockbroker in Auckland. It read:

> Dear Shera,
>
> Auckland has now a university. I am anxious that the munificent gift thus made to the City should be supplemented by all useful accessories. I therefore wish on such an occasion to give effect to an intention I have long entertained by giving to the citizens of Auckland my library, if the Mayor and Corporation for the time being will act as trustees on the same simple trust as the library I gave to Cape Town is held. Will you speak to the Mayor on the subject and let me know how this idea can be best carried out. I will then write to him regarding it. – G. Grey.[26]

The telegram was to offer both treasure and a challenge; a library of outstanding value for a building worthy to hold it. Seldom can the promise of such a gift have been made in a manner so casual. To many it must have seemed strange that, in making known his intention to honour the city, Grey had chosen as his go-between, not the mayor or the town clerk, but a business acquaintance. Some would have seen it as merely idiosyncratic. Others may have called it perverseness. Now out of office as premier of New Zealand, Grey sat on the opposition benches, a lonely and pathetic figure, quarrelling it is said with both friends and enemies. Perhaps he thought it time to make the grand gesture he had hinted at so often, of doing one day for Auckland what he had done 21 years earlier for Cape Town. There, the "Governor's gift" of 1861 had left the public library the inheritor of a superb collection of manuscripts and early printings, as well as books and manuscripts about the languages and customs of the African native peoples. Probably, also, he realised that it was the one thing needed to jolt the city council into replacing the old Mechanics' Institute building.

Certainly, the news set Auckland library-mad almost overnight. Aware that the Chancery Street premises were totally unsuitable to hold Grey's collection, the council asked Sir George if he would agree to the books being housed temporarily in the building of the Auckland Institute in Princes Street. Grey agreed. In subsequent correspondence with Philip A. Philips who, having served as mayor from 1871 to 1874, was now town


NEW ZEALAND TELEGRAPH.

0936

1223 — 8 11/19 Hallifax

Wellington 9 34 am
Auckd 19-6 82
M Shera Esq
Queen st Auckld.

Dear Shera, Auckland has now a University I am anxious that the munificent gift thus made to the city should be supplemented by all useful accessories I therefore avail on such an occasion to give effect to an intention I have long entertained by giving to the citizens of Auckland my library if the Mayor and Corporation for the time being will act as Trustees on the same simple

NEW ZEALAND TELEGRAPH.

0936

2/

trusts as the Library I gave to Cape Town is held /
will you speak to the Mayor on the subject and let me know how this idea can be best carried out - & will then write to him regarding it

Grey

9 46a

The telegram from Wellington in Sir George Grey's handwriting and dated 19 August 1882, announcing his intention to give his library to the citizens of Auckland. (Original in Rare Books Room of Auckland Public Library.)

clerk, he made it clear that the library was already the property of the citizens of Auckland. It was for them to deal with it as they might think proper and "subject only to the condition that no one is, during my life time, to remove books from it, except myself, but that I am to have the privilege of taking any books out and keeping them as long as I require." [27] The secretary of the Auckland Institute was also in agreement – so long as the council provided shelves and cases, and that the institute was not to be held liable in the case of fire. In the event, the space needed was more than the institute could find and Sir George was asked in January 1883, if he would keep his library at Kawau Island until a new city library and art gallery were built – "it is hoped within twelve months". [28]

The enthusiasm of the city councillors was to outrun the practicalities of the project. First would have to be fought the battle of the sites. They ranged all over town; Shortland Street at the intersection with Queen Street was suggested; as was the corner of Queen Street and Grey Street (now Greys Avenue) where the town hall stands today; and the area of the entrance to the markets off Wellesley Street West. One proponent for building it near Government House, countered the objection that it would be too far from the business centre by retorting that he had never seen a businessman in the library, anyway. There was a brief flurry, too, when it was reported that a committee of the council was in favour of the piece of land next to Councillor Crowther's Victoria

Stables in Wellesley Street East – the area destined 88 years later to be the location of the present Central Library. Displaying what was for the day remarkable foresight, the library committee of the city council insisted that the proposed building be in a prominent position, centrally located and free from noise. It recommended the area fronting Wellesley Street East and Coburg (later Kitchener) Street and backed by Albert Park. In March 1883 premiums of, respectively, £200 ($400) and £100 ($200) were offered for the best designs for the proposed library and art gallery. The amount to be spent on the building itself was not to exceed £18,000 ($36,000). Concerned that the figure might not be enough, the council asked the trustees of the Auckland Savings Bank to donate a portion of their surplus funds to the project. With regret the trustees replied that, much as they would like to do so, they had no authority to make grants from reserve funds. Considering those funds at the time amounted to a mere £28,224, ($56,448) the trustees probably thought them a pretty frail barrier against emergencies, anyway. The bank did, however, prove to be a generous friend to the library down the years, most notably in 1963, when the city council again found itself in much the same financial predicament over much the same kind of proposal.

Aid was to come, however, from a totally unexpected quarter. In April 1883 an astonished city learned that it was to benefit to the enormous sum of £84,000 ($168,000), bequeathed by a man almost nobody knew. His name was Edward Costley. An Irishman, he walked the streets of Auckland for some 40 years, dressed usually in an open-neck shirt and moleskin trousers. Some said that he had made a fortune on the goldfields at Thames and Coromandel in the 1860s. Others, only that he had invested prudently in the early days of Auckland. He lived frugally, never married, and was so retiring that no photograph of him has ever been found. In his will, however, he left a fortune to be divided equally among seven named charities. One of them was the Auckland Public Library. The windfall of £12,500 ($25,000) (which would yield an annual income of £800 - $1,600) released the council from the need to restrict its spending on the library building to £18,000 ($36,000). In gratitude, mayor and councillors attended Edward Costley's funeral – on foot.

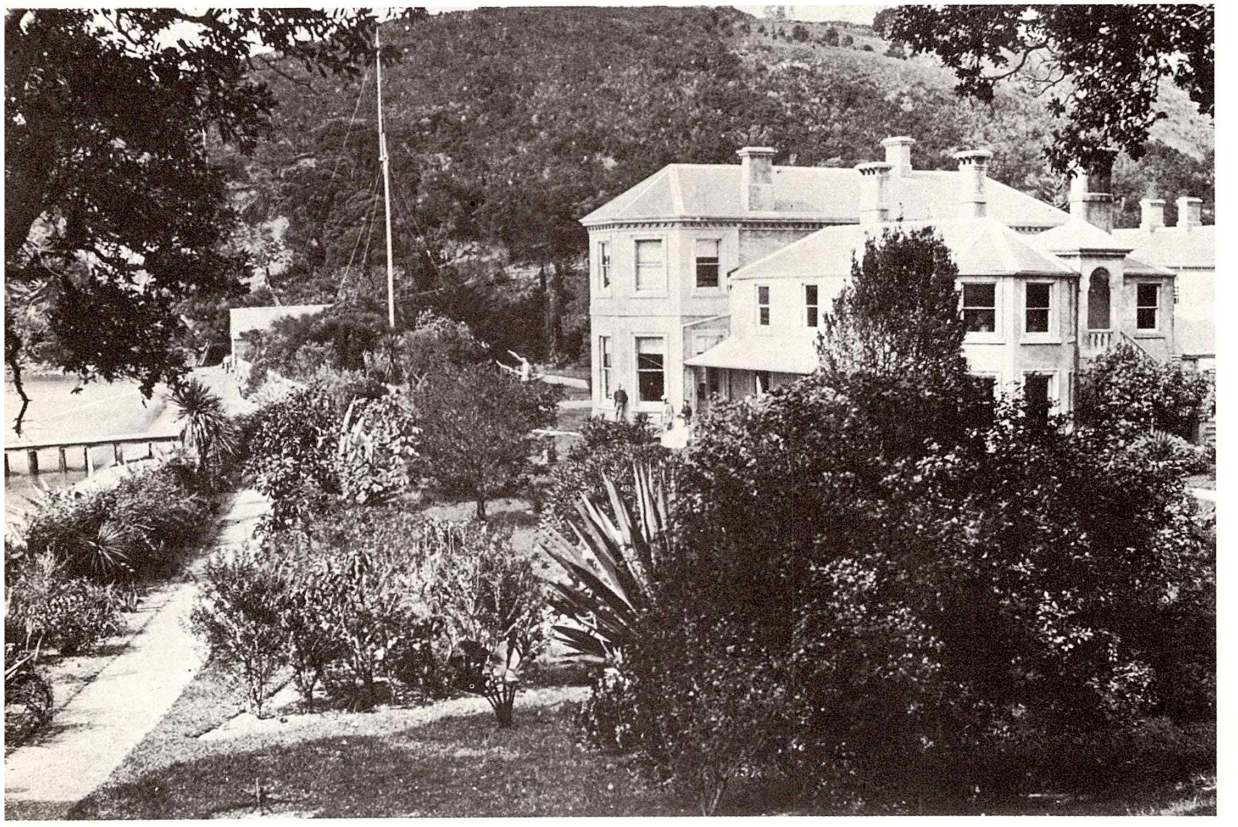
Aucklanders of the 1880s may have known almost nothing at all about their city's most generous single benefactor, Costley. It was quite the opposite with the man who was to give the Auckland Public Library an international reputation. By the time of his arrival in New Zealand as Governor in November 1845, George Grey had already enjoyed a distinguished career. Born in Lisbon in 1812, the son of an army officer serving in the Peninsular Wars, he had been educated in Guildford in England, and at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He was, however, bored by a soldier's life, and by the time he was 25 he had made a couple of exploratory expeditions in North West Australia. Married in 1839 (unhappily as it turned out), he was appointed Governor of South Australia a year later. There, his rigorous policies stopped the mania of speculative land-buying and drove the settlers to productive farming. It was hardly a policy to make

him popular with the settlers and, as his biographer Rutherford tells it, one Adelaide newspaper printed at the head of each issue the Shakespearian text, "Think upon GREY and let thy soul despair." [29]

Leaving Adelaide for Auckland in 1845 to be Governor of New Zealand, he succeeded in establishing peace with the warring Maoris, and kept that peace by establishing friendly relations with the leading chiefs and by scrupulously respecting their land rights. He was knighted in 1848 for distinguished service to both South Australia and New Zealand. In 1854 he went to the post of Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, entrusted with the task of protecting and pacifying the eastern Cape frontier against the Kaffir tribes. Here, too, he made enemies. He did not take kindly to criticism, especially from England. His increasing independence of the Colonial Office in London led to his recall in 1859, followed by his reinstatement with the warning that he must obey orders. That was something Grey always found difficult to do – at least graciously. His duty to the Queen, he once told someone, impelled him to disregard or to act contrary to orders issued from the other side of the world in entire ignorance of local circumstances, and to treat them merely as "general indications of a line of policy" to be interpreted and modified at his discretion.[30]

The year 1861 saw Grey again in New Zealand for a turbulent second period as governor. War with the Maoris had broken out in Taranaki the year before, and Grey had been sent back in the hope that his influence with the Maoris might bring peace, or if there were to be war, that he could win it quickly and dictate a humane settlement afterwards. As Rutherford makes clear, the task was beyond him. Some of the Maori tribes had lost faith in British justice and even Grey could not restore it. The settlers were demanding more and more land, while the Maoris were determined to prevent any extension of Pakeha settlement and Pakeha law. Grey had this time to deal, moreover, with an elected General Assembly in Wellington and with a responsible ministry. When he continued to defy the orders of the British Government to curtail the amount of land confiscation, stop the war, make the colony pay its share of the cost of the war, and send the troops back to England, his appointment was terminated in 1868. Removed from office, Grey retired to Kawau Island for a time, then briefly visited England, where he failed in an attempt to enter Parliament as a Liberal. He returned to New Zealand in 1874, became superintendent of the Auckland Province and, in a dual role as superintendent and a member of parliament for an Auckland seat, he fought unsuccessfully to prevent the abolition of the provincial form of government in 1875. He continued to sit in the House for a further 20 years, was premier for an unhappy two (1877-79), and did not formally resign his seat until 1895 at the age of 83.

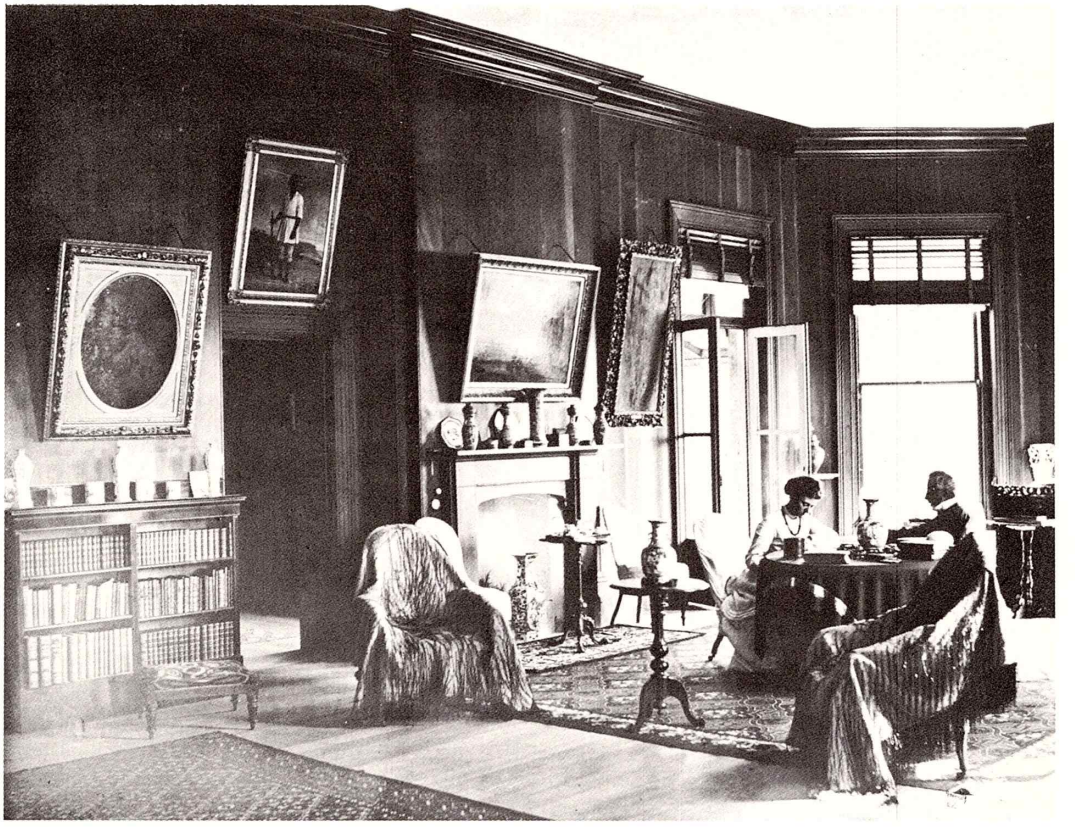
When the mood took him, Sir George Grey feasted on public adulation. But, as the historian James Anthony Froude commented in his *Oceana*, writing about his time as Grey's guest on Kawau Island; "Like most men of fine intellect, he had a taste for solitude, or at least the possibility of solitude when he wished for it."[31] Grey had bought



Sir George Grey's home, the Mansion House, and its surrounding gardens, on Kawau Island in the Hauraki Gulf, Auckland, 1873. From *Kawau*, a portfolio of photographs by D. L. Mundy.

Grey Collection, Auckland Public Library

the island, 50 kilometres north of Auckland, from the Government for £3,500 ($7,000) in 1862. He spent another £5,000 ($10,000) in converting to a stately residence overlooking Mansion House Bay, the residence built for the manager of a short-lived copper mining company. Grey was now in his early seventies, his hair had whitened and his step, which had been elastic and firm, was now feeble. Nonetheless, he enjoyed the company of Froude, during the week they shared in 1886. Froude describes the scene well. "He laid out the garden, where among orange groves and figs and pears, the choicest hothouse flowers bloomed carelessly, having been once introduced. Into the interior of his little kingdom he brought elk, red deer, fallow deer, roe, wild hog and wallaby. He has wild turkeys there and wild peacocks – anything and everything. He engaged men whom he knew and could depend on to manage his farms, the woods, sheep and cattle, his own grounds and gardens. He settled them, with their families, in substantial houses; and in democratic New Zealand he established a patriarchal mon-



Sir George Grey and his niece and adopted daughter, Annie Thorne George, in the drawing room of the Mansion House on Kawau Island, in probably the mid to late 1870s. From *Kawau,* a portfolio of photographs by D. L. Mundy. Grey Collection, Auckland Public Library

archy, held together by the singular personal attachment which he is able to command."[32] Froude then told how, having given away his first precious book collection to Cape Town, Grey had gathered a second collection. Grey lived amongst his intellectual treasures, in the company of dependants who "look upon him more as a father than a master; the house is always open to men of science, to the superior colonists, to strangers who have a better purpose than curiosity in seeking his acquaintance . . . The house, about 100 yards' distance from the landing place was large and well proportioned, with a high-pitched roof, a projecting front towards the sea, and a long verandah . . . passing through the hall we entered the spacious fine drawing room, panelled and bolted with Kauri pine. At one end stood Sir George's desk, with a large Bible on it, from which he read daily prayers to his household . . . Some good oil pictures hung on the walls, excellent old engravings, with Maori axes, Kaffir shields and assegais all prettily arranged. Book-cases and cabinets with locked doors contained the more precious curiosities. On

the table lay *Quarterlies*, *Edinburghs*, magazines, weeklies – the floating literature of London, only a month or two behind. In the evening he showed us his treasures . . . On certain days he threw open the house and grounds to excursion parties from Auckland. A steamer would come. They took possession of his garden. They ran freely about his rooms and staircases."[33] And when Froude expressed surprise that Grey could allow them such free rein, the old man replied that they did no harm, perhaps learnt a little, and at any rate enjoyed themselves. The books which the visitors so admired and appeared to have little inclination to meddle with, were to remain on their shelves in the drawing-room for another year after Froude saw them, before they were shipped to their new home in the city.

Grey may have been the bane of the lives of many with whom he had to deal at the official level. To Aucklanders in the 1880s, he was a draw-card and a spell-binder whenever he chose. The Theatre Royal in Queen Street (on the site of the present-day City Chambers) at the corner of Victoria St West, was packed to overflowing on the evening of 5 June 1883 to hear him speak on the subject of "The principles which should guide the citizens in the founding of a free public library." Grey revelled in his role. He was always at his best with children and with the public who, en masse, he treated like children, anyway. The doors were opened half an hour earlier than planned. More were turned away than got in. There were parliamentarians there, university professors, judges, dignitaries of local government, bankers, a couple of bishops and the governor of Mt Eden prison. Those officially invited crowded the stage. The dress circle had been reserved for ladies and for gentlemen accompanied by ladies. The audience of 200 rose to its feet when the old man (Grey was now 71) entered. They expected eloquence, and eloquence they were to get at great length. Grey reminded them of the range and kind of book that he would be giving the city, counselled them to see that the library would be open on Sundays (cheers), if only to allow use of the large proportion of books devoted to the scriptures. "Could you, if your port is resorted to by sailors from all nations – would you dare to shut out men, from every nation and clime, the power to go and read the scriptures in their own tongue – (cheers) when you might afford them the opportunity of so doing?" And, carried away by the occasion, Sir George was moved to speak of a library fitted to cultivated people of many languages and many nations, a library calculated – in centuries from that time, he trusted – to be the admiration of the world. (Cheers.)[34]

Then Grey told them a tale about one item in the collection, a tale calculated to send a shudder down the spine of the more squeamish of the audience. " . . . you may take in your hand the book which belonged to the first native martyr here. That man attempted to preach the Gospel near Hokianga. He was told that any man would be destroyed who should make the attempt, but first writing in pencil a devout prayer in the book which you can still read, he went unarmed amongst these people. They attacked him, they beat him down with the butt end of their muskets which drove the

book into his skull, which is still stained with his blood and brains. It will be something to look upon 100 years hence . . . " The slim volume Grey described is one of the rare copies of the first book ever printed in New Zealand; *Ko te Rongo Pai i Tuhituhia e Ruka* (and) *Ko nga Pukapuka o Paora te Apotoro Ki te hunga o Epeha o Piripai* (i.e. *The Gospel according to St. Luke* . . . and *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians and the Philippians*). The book was printed at Paihia by William Colenso in 1835.

Examining the book a century later, one must take Grey's word for it that it was indeed involved in violence of the kind he described so vividly. It looks little different from many another in his large collection of works in the Maori language. The anecdote must have been the talking point for many as they filed out of the theatre into Victoria Street West that cool winter's evening in 1883.

8

LAST DAYS IN THE OLD BUILDING

EARLY IN 1884 a committee of city councillors, artists and architects was considering competitive designs for the proposed library and art gallery. Until judging was completed, entries were to be identified only by mottoes submitted by the competitors.

In the four months allowed, seven entries had been received from architects throughout Australia and New Zealand. They were; "Bee hive", "Fidelity", "Hope in red shield", "Literae, scientiae et artes", "Pericles", "Rough Ashlar" and "Tataria".

There was long discussion and the inevitable difference of opinion. Finally, it was decided to award "the first premium" to "Literae, scientiae et artes", and the second to "Tataria". The winning design was then announced as coming from a Melbourne partnership of architects, D'Ebro and Grainger. The second premium was won by N.Y.A. Wales of Dunedin. Within the month, Mr Grainger was preparing working plans and specifications. In January 1885 the tender of I.W. Lovatt was accepted for clearing the site. Two months later the contract for building was signed with Messrs Price and Malcolm. In accepting the lower of two tenders of £19,505 ($39,010) for a building faced in brick and cement, as opposed to £20,722 ($41,444) for an alternative one fronted in Oamaru stone, the council probably reached the right decision for the wrong reason. Twentieth century air pollution was to play havoc with the next major municipal building, the town hall opened in 1911, and faced in just such stone.

The early 1880s were boom years in Auckland. Large companies like Kauri Timber and the Northern Steam Ship were formed; trains began to run from the foot of Queen Street to areas as far away as Henderson and Kumeu; horse trams began the service from the port area (the Waitemata Hotel corner) to the Ponsonby reservoir in 1884; the Devonport Steam Ferry Company bought the steamers *Tainui, Devonport* and *Takapuna.* And the face of Auckland began to reflect the changing times. They must have been rewarding days for "footpath supervisors". At a half-dozen points around town, lunch-time strollers could measure the progress of their city. At the bottom of Albert Street the new customs house was going up; the brownstone bulk of the Victoria Arcade was beginning to dominate the corner of Queen Street and Shortland Street; on reclaimed land along the seaward side of Customs Street East, and masking the new railway station and yards from view, a solid line of merchant warehouses marched steadily eastwards. What interested Aucklanders most, though, was the activity on the south-western flank of Albert Park, where Wellesley Street East met a newly-aligned Coburg Street. Watching Mr Lovatt's men clear the site for the library, fathers told their children how, just a few years before, the Albert military barracks cut across the area. Some were still heard to declare that a better location for the library would have been where the old courthouse, gallows and stocks once stood mid-town at the intersection of Queen Street and Victoria Street West. And cynics murmured that the only reason it was being built at the corner of the park was the business it would bring to Councillor William Crowther, whose transport stables were just across the road.

On the afternoon of 4 June 1885 many of them would have gone along to swell the crowd of 6,000 or so to see the laying of the foundation stone of the library and art gallery. To watch the guard of honour from the volunteers muster outside the Drill Hall across the way in Rutland Street; applaud the musical selections presented by the Garrison band and join in the singing of the National Anthem led by the choir of children from nearby Wellesley Street School; and to admire the elegant dresses and hats of the ladies. And, highlight of the afternoon, to see, over the heads of the crowd, the mayor presented with a silver trowel by the contractors and receive from the architect, a mallet made of New Zealand woods.

When it came to the speeches, there was not a great deal to be remembered in what the ex-Premier, Sir Frederick Whitaker said, nor Sir Maurice O'Rorke, the Speaker of the House. Even Sir George Grey seemed bent on reminding everyone that Auckland would not be getting the building had it not been for the promise of his valuable collection of books and artifacts. And, listening, they wondered whether some day anyone would dig up the container which Mr Waddel, the mayor, was placing in an aperture between two blocks of bluestone and which, he told them, contained a parchment scroll, recent copies of the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Evening Star,* along with some small coins. Few of them would, of course, be invited afterwards to St. Mungo's rooms to set the seal on the afternoon's activities. The mouths would water,

next day, however, as they read in the paper what Mr Waddel and his friends treated themselves to: oysters au naturel, soup, fillet of sole or salmon rissoles for the first course; a choice of entrees to the number of twelve, including quenelles of rabbit and boiled turkey in celery sauce, roast pheasant or hare in port wine sauce, a dessert selected from gooseberry pie, meringue a la creme and port wine jelly (to name only three of ten) topped off with a wine list that ran from absinthe and amontillado sherry to port and curacao.

Until the new building was opened the citizens continued to make use of the old. They were, of course, ignorant of the small quarrels and differences between council and the architects, whose partnership had dissolved; or between council and its contractors who asked for, but were refused, an extension of time; or between council and the clerks of works, two of whom resigned.

While building went ahead steadily on the new library, business continued much as usual back at the old institute. Each afternoon the patrons saw Shillington leave on the brief walk to Shortland Street to get the copy of the *Evening Star* for the reading room. And they listened as he told them how often he came back to find that a few more drinking glasses had been broken at the filter from which the public drained some ten gallons (45 litres) daily. It probably had nothing to do with the popularity of the water filter, which he said he had to fill about eight times a day, but the almost total absence of drunken men in the library was worthy of note in those first few years of city council control. Only two had to be ejected in 1885. Two more patrons were convicted for theft, and one for assault on Shillington himself. Those jailings took his record for convictions to three in the space of four years.

Shillington's non-involvement in book selection spared him the wrath of the public and the papers when it came to criticism of the bookstock. "Public interest is now so thoroughly awakened in the matter of the free library and the hideous selection of books recently made," thundered the *New Zealand Herald*, "that we may leave our erring City Councillors to the tender mercies of correspondents. The *Tales of the Border* are very trashy and worthless reading, and the novels of Besant and Rice, James Payne and Mrs Henry Wood will soon be quite forgotten . . . the Library Committee have laboriously engaged in building up a library for 'loafers' and 'spongers', purchasing the variest trash of yellowback novels (only in expensive bindings) while at the same time the library has little use for anyone who wants to refer to the standards of literature or to books containing technical instruction in the arts and sciences."[35]

While it was probably true that there were more readers for Mrs Wood's *East Lynne* than for the *Story of an African Farm* by Olive Schreiner, and for *By Celia's Arbour* by Besant and Rice, than for Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*, it was equally true that the demand for Dickens and Thackeray and Thomas Hardy continued unabated.

Mr Philips, who had been a leading light in the Mechanics' Institute, mayor of the city, and was now town clerk, considered he knew more (and probably did) about

libraries than anyone else on the council. It was he who wrote away to libraries in England, the United States and Australia to see how a library should be run, how many books they lost and how much they spent on replacements. It was he who requested catalogues of holdings from other libraries to show the kind of books to be bought for Auckland "during the next, say, five or ten years," with the assistance of gentlemen outside the council in branches of knowledge most familiar to them. And, when the catalogue was finally selected and adopted by the council it would be in Mr Philips' office that it would remain. Mr Shillington did, however, win his point about needing "a respectable youth" as an assistant at £50 ($100) per year. Eight such young men considered they fulfilled requirements. The one they appointed, C. D. Fox, lasted little more than twelve months. In January 1886 his successor, William L. Covert, joined Shillington in setting about the multitude of tasks great and small that would have to be done before the opening of the new library little more than a year hence.

In the late spring of 1886 Sir George Grey decided to give Tom Osborne a break from making bee boxes, roofing the manure house and painting the boat on Kawau Island. He entrusted him with the job of packing up the books and objects he had promised for the new library that would soon be opening in Auckland. Osborne was a Scot of few words. And, as the diary[36] he kept testifies, the weather interested him more than the social round. Just as obviously, though, he took the responsibility conferred on him seriously.

26 November 1886 saw him head down at his new task. "Among the books," he wrote "but get along slowly 154 books packed tonight. A dirty looking night blow hard wind east." And the next day – "A schooner put in for shelter. A miserable wet day. Packing books 224 works on botany packed up tonight. Do a little cricket this evening." Then came Sunday. No work was ever done on the Sabbath on Kawau, certainly not if Sir George was in residence. "Attend prayers read by Sir George Grey. Sunday at home. Anything but a nice day. Singing in the evening." From then on for ten days it is simply and regularly "Packing books," with the occasional side comment like "Very slow and no mistakes, finished 33 boxes tonight." "Some 5,000 books working at the bibles, pack about 30 books today, do a good dose of housemaids work." 29 December 1886 brought reward for his labours and a new sense of authority. "The S.S. *Rose Casey* left for Auckland with mail and 40 cases of books for the free library. I go in charge of books. I and J. Taylor send up eight cases of oils, we arrived after a lumpy passage at 5 p.m. I stop and see the books placed in their new and permanent homes. Go to bed rather tired." The following day it is – "I deliver catalogues of letters to the Mayor and Town Clerk. No appearances of work. I make up my mind to return home. Weather fine have a fly around." Crating up curios filled Tom Osborne's next week back on the island. It must have been a change at least, to be taking the dirt off the Maori carvings. These he delivered on another trip to the city on 12 January 1887, and on 13 January he wrote;

Life moved at a leisurely pace in Edwardian Auckland. One of the new electric trams (they were introduced in 1902) makes its turn from Queen Street into Wellesley Street West, but the horse is still king of the road in this 1903 view. Auckland Public Library

"Do a little buzz about town have a look around new library building. See Mayor." Then it was back once again to the books, and the pace quickened.

21 January 1887; "Start packing books relating to New Zealand and Pacific Islands. The rains come at last."

14 February; "Pack books Bohn Series."

Then a brief change of role.

18 February; "The S.S. *Wellington* arrived from Auckland with Sir George Grey and Lord Sandhurst passenger. A long day."

19 February; "I do the butler business for Lord Sandhurst."

By early March the pace was really on.

14 March; "A very fine day with light sea breezes – packing books – African mss and New Zealand and school books."

18 March; "Clean silver spade to go to free library."

19 March; "Cleaning silver spade and trowels sharpen saw, pack books spade and trowels and Cromwele letters and a number of others. Interesting subjects in case 51."

22 March; "Cobbling, finishing packing number 51 case with Cromwells, Livingstones and Sturt letters."

Wednesday 23 March; "The S.S. *Rose Casey* left for Auckland with mails and case 51 for free library, we met the steamer at Mullet Point to put Sir George Grey who goes, has passengers to Auckland." Finally, the entry for Saturday 26 March 1887; "Cannot keep from housemaids work, do a very little toward keal of old boat. Take Mr Gray to Stockyard Bay and North Harbour. Fine day with northerly breeze. Auckland free library opened today."

9

THE NEW LIBRARY

AFTER ALL HIS WORK crating and carrying, Tom Osborne, carpenter to Sir George Grey, was not in town to see the new library opened that humid Saturday of 26 March 1887. Many hundreds of Auckland's 33,000 citizens were. High above the main tower – which was to remain clock-less for a further seven years – floated the British Royal Standard. Less important flags fluttered in the northerly breeze from the other minarets. Across the road, Councillor Crowther ran up the Union Jack above his Victoria Stables.

The thousand or more invited guests crowded the art gallery hall, the more important thirty or so of them on an improvised stage. As was his due, Sir George Grey had the seat of honour. The conductor of the Choral Society, Herr Carl Schmidt, had offered a year earlier to compose a cantata for the occasion. The city council had thought it too expensive a proposition. He did, however, lead the choir and the crowd in the singing of the national anthem to open proceedings.

A new mayor, A.E.T. Devore, barrister and solicitor, was the master of ceremonies. Between the matter-of-factness of his historical survey and what was to be the oratorical highlight of the afternoon, the choir "rendered, with much power" the introduction and chorus, *Lobegesang*, by Mendelssohn. Then 75-year-old Sir George Grey was on his feet for all of 30 minutes. Just to hear him speak was enough for many.

However, much of what he said, he had said on earlier occasions. For many of his listeners he revealed one previously unknown fact about the collection of books he had given to the city. He said he could not claim to be the first donor of valuable books to Auckland. That honour belonged to Sir James Everard Home who, at the time of his death in 1853, had been Senior Naval Officer on the Australian station. As captain of

Flags flew from every tower the day the Auckland Public Library was opened on 26 March 1887. Save for a photographer, a friend or two and a family sheltering from the late-summer sun, the crowds have gone and Wellesley Street East is all but deserted. Auckland Public Library

the H.M.S. *North Star*, Home had seen service in New Zealand during the wars in the north with Hone Heke between 1845 and 1846. With Grey, he had shared a keen interest in literature and in botany, and had bequeathed to Grey a number of valuable books "to be included as part of the public library which he trusted would be established at the seat of government in New Zealand." [37]

The speeches still to come could be only anti-climax. Ex-mayor Peacock made a plea for citizens with special ability to come forward to help with book selection; ex-mayor J. McCosh Clark, noting "the present heated atmosphere," thought he could be excused a lengthy address, and said little. Ex-mayor Waddel was also understanding. He, like

the ex-mayor before him, remarked on the heat of the late afternoon sun and was, as he promised he would be, "merciful to both audience and himself".

Not so the indefatigable Sir Maurice O'Rorke. He came forward "amidst great applause" (not necessarily, one feels, because the audience knew he was to be the last of the six speakers). Although he was to say it himself, he had been responsible, probably more than anyone else, for the Public Libraries Act becoming law in the colony. He also added weight to the comments of Mr Devore an hour or so earlier, about the need to plan for the lending department in the library. First lend to ratepayers, Sir Maurice advised. "And then, if necessary, to others who bring a recommendation from a ratepayer. But as this style of library entails some expense, I think it only right that those who will get the inestimable boon of taking the books home should pay a small charge for them and it would be only reasonable and just." [38]

Following which, and with the day well advanced, Sir George Grey was conducted to the "Library Hall" (which would be known thereafter as the reference department). There, he declared the building formally opened. Released at last, the visitors "swarmed all over the place, many proceeding to the refreshment-room and partaking of the committee's hospitality," others "wandering to the upper storeys and thoroughly exploring the building".

Understandably, comments in the visitors' book in the new public library were more flattering than those of 1880. No fewer than 107 people had queued to enter their impressions of opening day. Among those who could still be called "mechanics", were a storeman, a carter, a miller, a saddler, a blacksmith, a scissors-grinder, a tailor, a carpenter, a watchmaker and a cabinetmaker. From the professions were a solicitor, an accountant and a teacher. There was even a "warder from the gaol", a free-thinker, and a "gent". Arthur Eady, who would later set up a firm of music suppliers, was there that Saturday afternoon, as also was Alfred Kidd, a city councillor who would be mayor of the city in another 14 years, and Gideon Smales, a well-known clergyman. Casting a critical eye, an architect from Dunedin declared it "passable" (could he have been the second place-getter in the competition called earlier for designs?). Two "gentlemen" found the lights "too dull" (these would have been the new gas ones). A couple of comments, however, seemed to sum up what was important. A matchmaker from Cambridge wrote; "The greatest one I've ever seen." And a solicitor from Sydney rated the library "very good, considering the age of the Colony." So it was on both counts. With a pride in the city probably unequalled since that day, and rising splendidly to the challenge thrown out by Grey five years earlier, the city council had provided what was by far the most impressive official building erected in Auckland up to that time. But, the handsome building apart, it was undoubtedly the books presented by Grey that gave the institution a distinction in New Zealand that would remain unchallenged a century later.

After what he had known in the tiny, crowded institute, Edward Shillington must

have felt overwhelmed by the immensity of the French-Renaissance-style building to which he had moved. On the ground floor, there was, on the right, a room where visitors could play chess and draughts. Straight ahead lay the reading room, with the latest copies of upwards of 60 newspapers from all over New Zealand, along with a further 56 from Great Britain, the United States of America, the Fiji Islands and from Australia. Upstairs, directly above the chess room, was the librarian's office. It held, also, some of the more valuable items of the Grey Collection. The rest of the first floor was taken up by the reference department, 29 metres long, 10 metres wide and 10 metres high. Down the centre of it were four long tables in kauri wood. Books from the Grey Collection filled the bays on the Albert Park side, and items from the public library stock the corresponding bays nearest Wellesley Street. In all, the reference department had seating for 250, with space for 100 more in the gallery one floor higher again.

The new building was not, of course, all Shillington's domain as a library. From 17 February 1888, part of it would function as the art gallery – the first permanent one of its kind in New Zealand. Nominally, Shillington had charge of it too, although for 23 years he would mention that poor relation only rarely in his annual report. The history of the art gallery (which would not get a director of its own until 1952) will no doubt be written in due course.

The mayor, councillors and the city officials would also share the premises, until 1911. And rooms upstairs would be occupied by the School of Art, established in 1890 by a prominent citizen, John Edward Elam.

Aucklanders quickly came to know the big building on the Coburg Street corner as the place to go to read a good book or newspaper for an hour or two, to look at some of the pictures and curios presented by Sir George Grey, and to pay their rates. It would be late 1889, however, before they could take books home for reading. And 1894 before they could look up to the tower of Auckland's most imposing public building to tell the time in that part of the city. For seven years the four circles in the top of the library tower were to remain clock-less. The contract price for the building had simply not allowed for a clock and chimes. An enterprising local company had been allowed, in 1888, to install a set of tubular bells temporarily in the tower and to ring them before 10 a.m. and between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. By October 1894, however, newspaper reporters were being invited to make the arduous climb into the tower by near-vertical wooden ladders, to watch the clock being regulated, and to be all-but deafened by the chimes announcing to Auckland the quarter hours, with the large bell booming the hours of the day and night.

Shillington had the help of William Covert till 1890. Late in the previous year, Covert had applied to the council for four weeks' leave of absence, had been granted two, and had put in his resignation. At first he was asked to reconsider. Then he was offered a small increase in salary if he would do all the clerical work in the library. Within a couple of months Covert was to become a casualty in a campaign by the council to cut

costs in the library. He was dismissed. At the same time, the lending library, occupying ground-floor space on the Coburg Street frontage, was moved upstairs to share a room with Shillington, next to the reference department. It was to stay there, cramped for space, for nine years. In 1899 it returned to the more northerly of the two rooms on the Coburg Street side. The second room was not made available to the library until 1912, when the municipal offices were transferred to the new town hall.

The third member of the library staff was Miss E.D. Braithwaite, appointed just after the 1887 opening. In 1890 she was put in charge of the lending library, at a salary of £60 ($120) a year. When her resignation was received "with regret" in 1892 (could it have been because the charwoman was getting more than she was?), there were 60 applicants for her position.

At the institute, Shillington, with his wife and daughter, had lived literally on the job. From 1887 he was to have only a short walk home to lunch up through Albert Park to the Lodge, an attractive cottage still standing near the corner of Princes Street and Wellesley Street East. It had previously been occupied by the park gardener. The family was to live in it for just on 20 years, rent free, as soon as a room previously used to store firewood and coal had been made into a bathroom with a 30 shilling bath installed.

As Sir George Grey and others had urged, the library was opened on Sundays (from 1889, the hours were from 2 p.m. - 10 p.m.). And, despite the fact that for the next 16 years horse trams were not allowed to run on the Sabbath (trams were permitted to run on Sundays from 1903, but not during church hours in the morning and evening), an average of 400 people managed by 1893 to find their way each Sunday to the library and newspaper room.

In answer to Thomas Peacock's call, a book selection committee of nine was formed in 1888, comprising academics, senior journalists and businessmen. The lending library was opened in October of the following year with a book stock of 248 volumes and a classified catalogue.

Arguing his added responsibilities, Shillington requested a salary increase in 1890. In refusing him, the council added to its minutes the ominous comment of "the desirability of obtaining a librarian with a good literary knowledge".[39] Even so, it could hardly fault Shillington's housekeeping. Examples of what he called "biblio-kleptomania" remained low, and in 1892 he was able to report with evident satisfaction on the sentencing to three years' penal servitude of a thief he had apprehended, and then listing (unwittingly?) among the missing titles, *For the Term of his Natural Life*, by Marcus Clarke; and he was able, in 1893, to let children aged 14 and more join the lending library and, in 1895, to persuade council to get him an assistant, H.B. Farnall, at £60 ($120) a year.

With the onset of economic hard times, the last decade of the 19th century was a period of retrenchment in local government in Auckland. In 1899, and after 25 years as town clerk, the services of the ubiquitous Philip Philips were dispensed with. Out, too,

went the city engineer, the inspector of nuisances, the superintendent of the fire brigade, and the blacksmith. Watching his fellow departmental heads go, and recalling, perhaps, that earlier comment in council about the desirability of getting a librarian with a good literary knowledge, Shillington possibly felt relieved that he had still both his job and a free house.

After six months on leave overseas in 1902, an emboldened Edward Shillington on his return presented, for the first time, his own list of suggested additions to the lending library. The book selection committee agreed with the titles of fiction in it, but Professor Brown, from the university, was called upon to vet the scientific works. As librarian, Shillington was no doubt happy a year later to escape the wrath of the press. In late 1904 the city council had appointed a sub-committee principally to "weed out from the library in a judicious manner useless and pernicious books."[40]

That was too much for the editor of the *New Zealand Observer*: "It will drive out borrowers," he said, "to private libraries. The idea is to exclude all novels except those with a moral or religious tendency. If the ratepayers of Auckland permit a clerical-ridden committee to bowdlerise their library, they will deserve to grow up in darkness."[41] Two of the committee of three were clergymen, Rabbi Goldstein and Rev T.F. Robertson. The third member was the timber-merchant Councillor L.J. Bagnall, who would be mayor of the city in 1910. The official records and the files of the press are silent on whether the sub-committee ever did carry out its witch-hunt. If it did it would have had to examine a collection in which there was a ratio of one title of fiction to one of general literature.

10

THE GREY COLLECTION

IN AUCKLAND the library and art gallery were closed on 22 September 1898, and around the city flags flew at half mast. It was the day of the funeral, in London, of Sir George Grey. He had died there three days earlier at the age of 86. Too old and ill to be without constant attention, he had sold Kawau Island in 1888, and moved to Auckland to live with the family of his niece, Mrs Annie Thorne George, in Parnell. When he was able, he went to the small room in the library set aside for his personal use, to be surrounded by and to read some of the books in his collection.

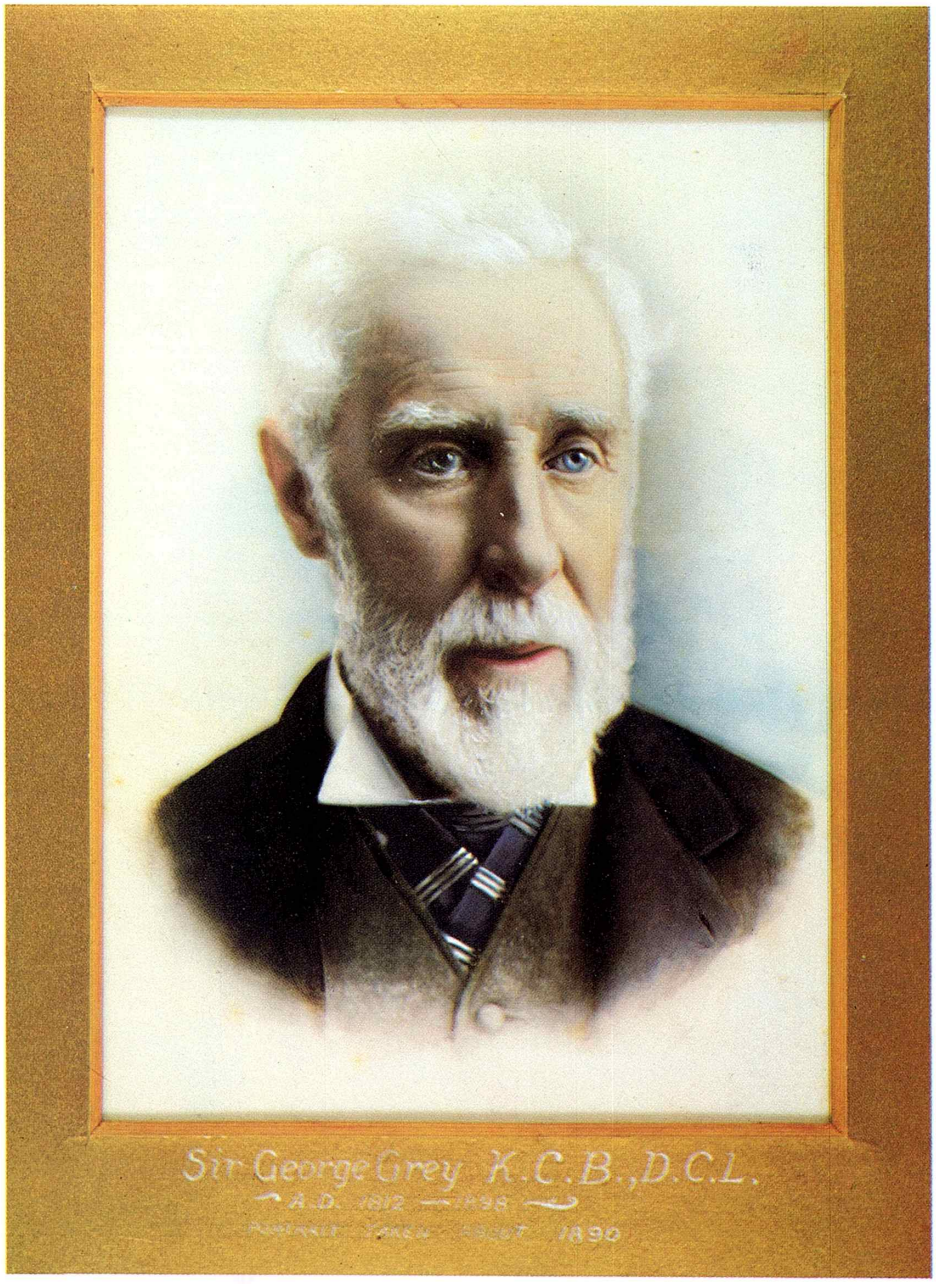
And he spent some time – unhappily – in the Northern Club in Princes Street. "Inactivity chafed and fretted him," as Rutherford put it.[42] "The social amenities of the club had no appeal, and he became thoroughly miserable except when he could forget himself in the company of children. The older Grey became and the less inclined ever to admit that he could be wrong, the more he let himself become involved in argument and recrimination. Apparently the only members of the club who ever bothered to speak to him were Professors A.P.W. Thomas and W.S. Aldis. Grey had shared an interest in biology and geology with Thomas; and Aldis, who had frequently been a house-guest at Kawau, had supervised Tom Osborne's packing of books on the island.

In 1894 Grey had sailed quietly for England, where he was invested by Queen Victoria as a Privy Councillor. Reconciliation with his wife after 37 years of separation, brought no joy to either of them. Lady Grey died suddenly in early September 1898. The death of Sir George was announced on 19 September. After a state funeral, he was buried in St Paul's Cathedral.

In Auckland, Sir George Grey is commemorated in the name of one of the city's most attractive thoroughfares, tree-lined Greys Avenue; by a statue in Albert Park where, his back turned untypically on the nearby likeness in bronze of his beloved Queen, his gaze is seemingly fixed on the figure of a soldier in stone recalling the war with the Boers in South Africa; and in the Auckland Public Library, where the books and documents he presented to the city assure him his place as the most generous of the library's many generous benefactors.

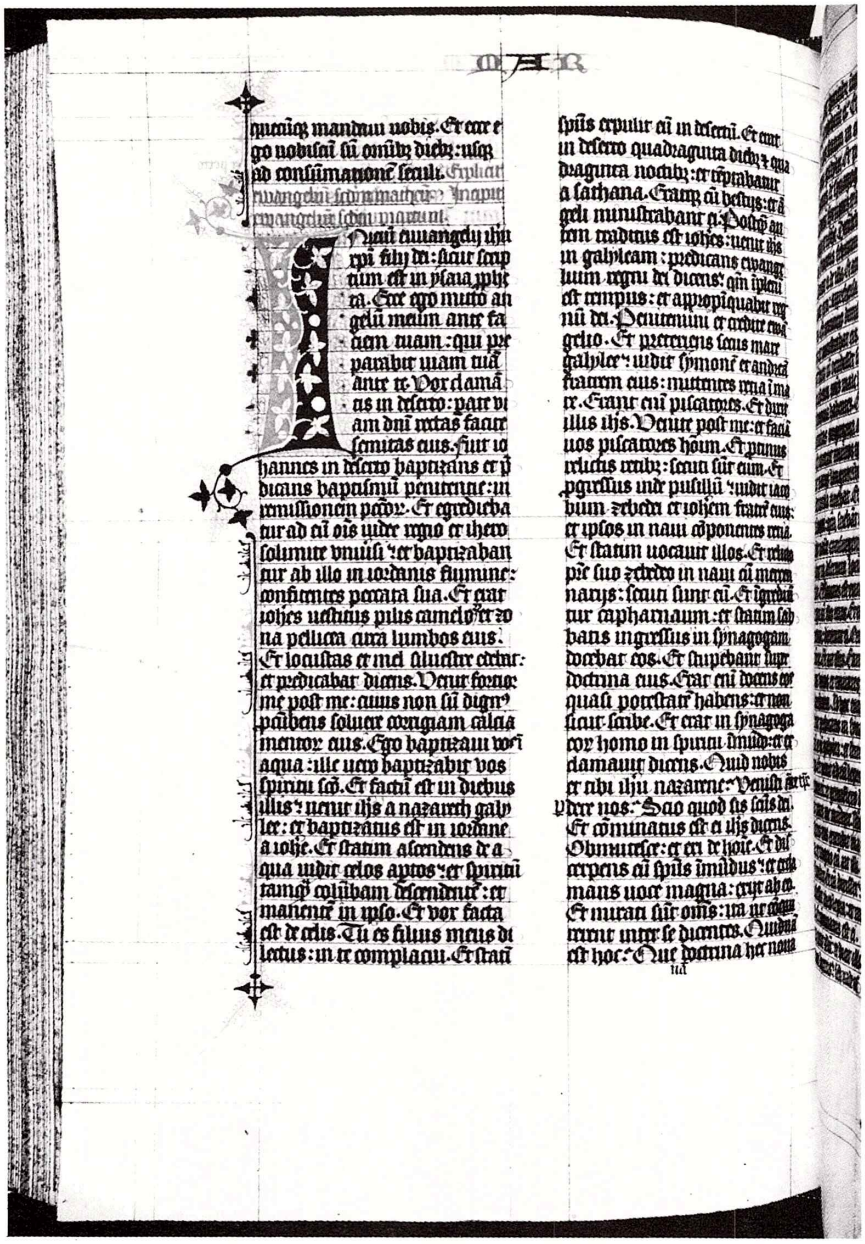
"Sir George's wealth is all in his library which he has given to Auckland. Someone else might just as well have had the value of it – the people here do not and never can be educated up to it. Those who can afford to interest themselves in these sorts of things would not live in Auckland." [43] Thus wrote Annie Thorne George, Grey's niece and adopted daughter, to his aide-de-camp in London about six months before Grey's death. Her low and clearly unwarranted opinion of Auckland and Aucklanders aside, Mrs Thorne George was right in one respect. Grey did not die a rich man. The sale of his Kawau Island property realised only £12,000 ($24,000), his bank account in 1896 amounted to no more than £5,000 ($10,000), and the bill for his funeral had to be paid out of an estate of some £800 ($1,600). Obviously, such wealth as he had gained was spent in developing his island home, and in collecting the priceless libraries he presented to Cape Town and to Auckland.

The public were understandably slow to appreciate the richness and range of the gift Grey had given. In the old library, the various components of the collection had been scattered throughout the building. Shortage of space had meant that some sections were shelved high in unheated, unlighted wooden attics two floors above the reference department. It was only when the first stage of the new library was opened in 1971 that Aucklanders were able to see the Grey books in a worthy setting. Even scholars were



Sir George Grey (1812-1898)

From a coloured photograph of about 1890, in the Auckland Public Library.
The items illustrated in the following 16 pages are selected from the Grey Collection.



Biblia Sacra Latina

A manuscript of the 15th century, in Latin on vellum. Reproduced from one of two large volumes, with capital letters and initials in gold and colours. 440mm high x 320mm wide. See description on pages 66, 69.

Aſcanyus came in lombardye .regned in Ieruſalem kyn
ge Dauyd the fader of Salamon that the ſcrypture pray
ſeth ſoo moche. After Latynus Sylupnus regned in
lombardye Albaſylpus xxix. yeres/ After hym regned
Egyſtus ſilupus xxbij. yeres. After regned Capys ſilup;
us xxiij. yere/ After regned Ehibrynus ſylupnus bij
yeres. After regned Capeſtus viij yere/ After regned
Sylupnus agryppa lx. yeres ¶ In this tyme was O;
merus moche made of/ and renommed of ſcyence in Gre;
ke/ After Agryppa regned Armelyus ſylupnus xix. ye;
res/ This kynge was vnhappy .and was ſlayne wyth
the thonder/ After hym dyde reyne Poſtyus ſilupnus/
In this kynges dayes bygganne the hiſtoryes of the roma
yns. and of them that founded rome. But therof I
ſhall telle now nomore/but ſhall here make an ende of this
lytyll boke/named Eneydos:

HERE fynyſſheth the boke of Eneydos/compyled by Vyr
gyle/whiche hathe be tranſlated oute of latyne in to frenſhe/
And oute of frenſhe reduced in to Englyſſhe by me Wyllm
Caxton/ the xvij. daye of Juyn. the yere of our lorde. M. iiij
C lxxxx. The fythe yere of the Regne of kynge Henry
the ſeuenth

The Boke of Eneydos (from Virgil's Aeneid)

The final page of a work of 86 leaves, translated into English and printed by William Caxton in London about 1490. 246mm x 185mm. See also page 70.

Lectionarium cum calendario

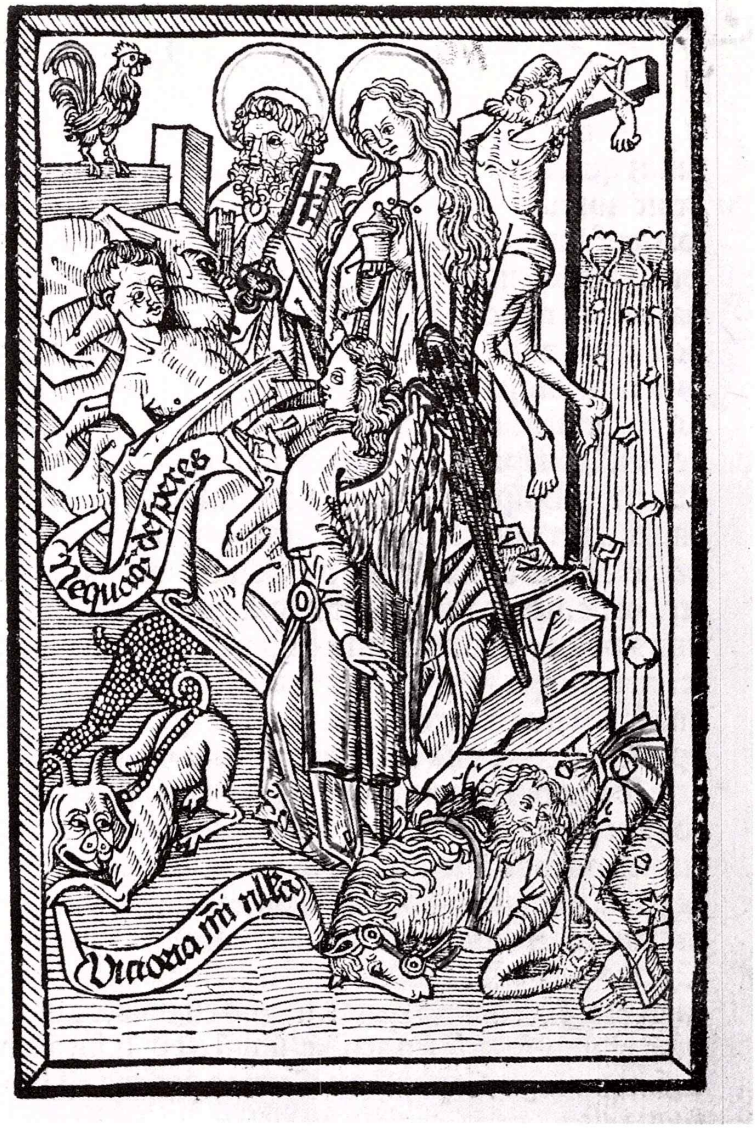
Directions and readings for the services of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the year. A manuscript of the 15th century in Latin on vellum, with illustrated capitals in gold and colours. 345mm x 440mm. See also page 66.

Evangelium IV Graece (The Four Gospels)

A manuscript of the 12th century, in Greek on vellum, showing an illustration (one of only two) of St Luke in red and black. 200m x 290mm. See also page 66.

Comediae Sex (Six Comedies)

By Publius Terentius, printed in Strasburg by Johann Gruninger in 1499. The rare second edition of Gruninger's illustrated Terence. 280mm x 195mm. See also page 71.



Ars Moriendi (The Art of Dying)

A block book printed about 1480. The text on the page facing the woodcut reads: "The good angel brings hope. Although your sins are as numerous as drops of water in the ocean, although you alone have committed all the sins of the world, and never repented nor made confession, there is still hope. God will not despise a contrite heart. His mercy is greater than any sin. Christ was crucified for sinners. Think of Peter, of Mary Magdalene, of the thief crucified with Christ, of Paul. Despair helps nothing and makes other sins worse." 183mm x 132mm. See also page 71.

Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis

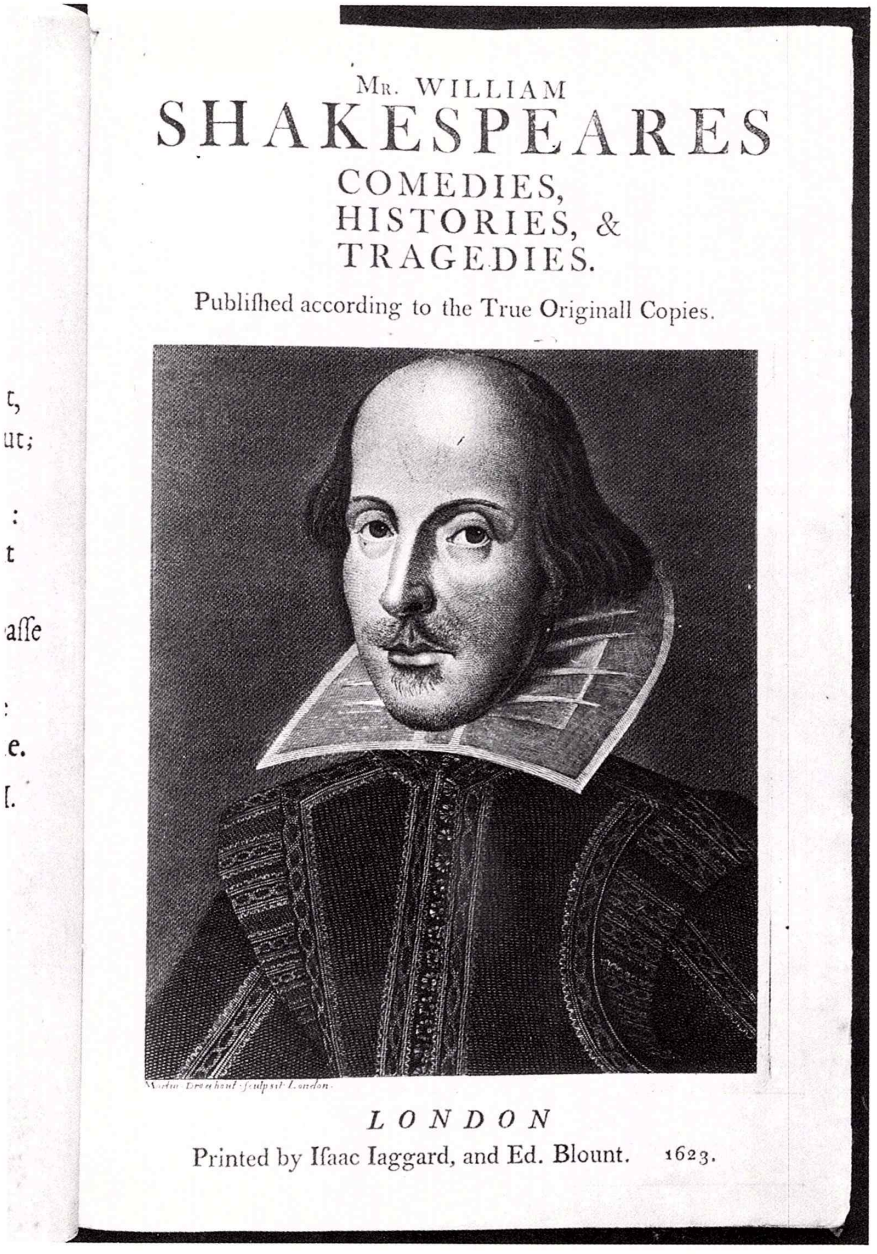
A Book of Hours of the 15th century, a manuscript in Latin on vellum written by an English scribe. The illustration, one of 25 large miniatures in gold and colours, is of St. George slaying the dragon. 245mm x 182mm. See also page 68-9.

Missale Romanum

A manuscript of the 15th century, in Latin on vellum. The illustration is of the Three Wise Men of the east (the Magi), and is one of many smaller miniatures in a two-volume work. 310mm x 230mm. See also pages 67-8.

Europe: A Prophecy

The Almighty takes the golden compasses – frontispiece to *Europe: A Prophecy* by William Blake, printed in 1794. 235mm x 169mm. See also page 71.



First Folio Shakespeare

The title page of the rare *First Folio Shakespeare*, printed in 1623. Of some 1000 copies believed to have been produced of this first edition, fewer than 200 remain in existence. 310mm x 208mm. See also pages 65, 71.

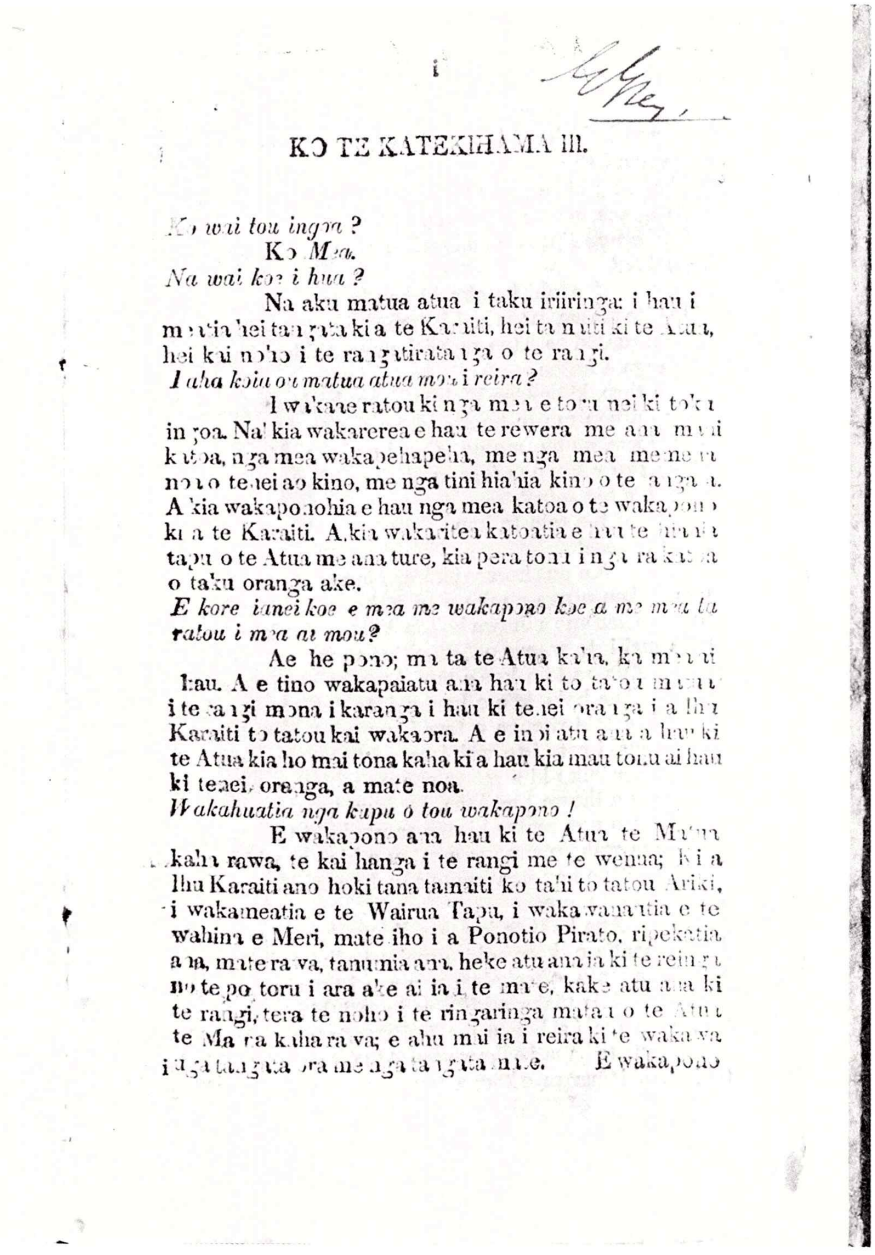
De Consolatione Philosophiae

A manuscript probably of the 15th century, in French on vellum, and derived from the famous work of Boethius. With capitals illuminated in gold and colours. 305mm x 205mm. See also pages 66-7.

Historiarum de Bello Iudaico

The Wars of the Jews by Flavius Josephus. A manuscript of the 15th century, in Latin on vellum, with eight capitals illuminated in gold and colours, the first (this one) with three illuminated borders. 340mm x 245mm.

WAIMAIRI COUNTY LIBRARIES

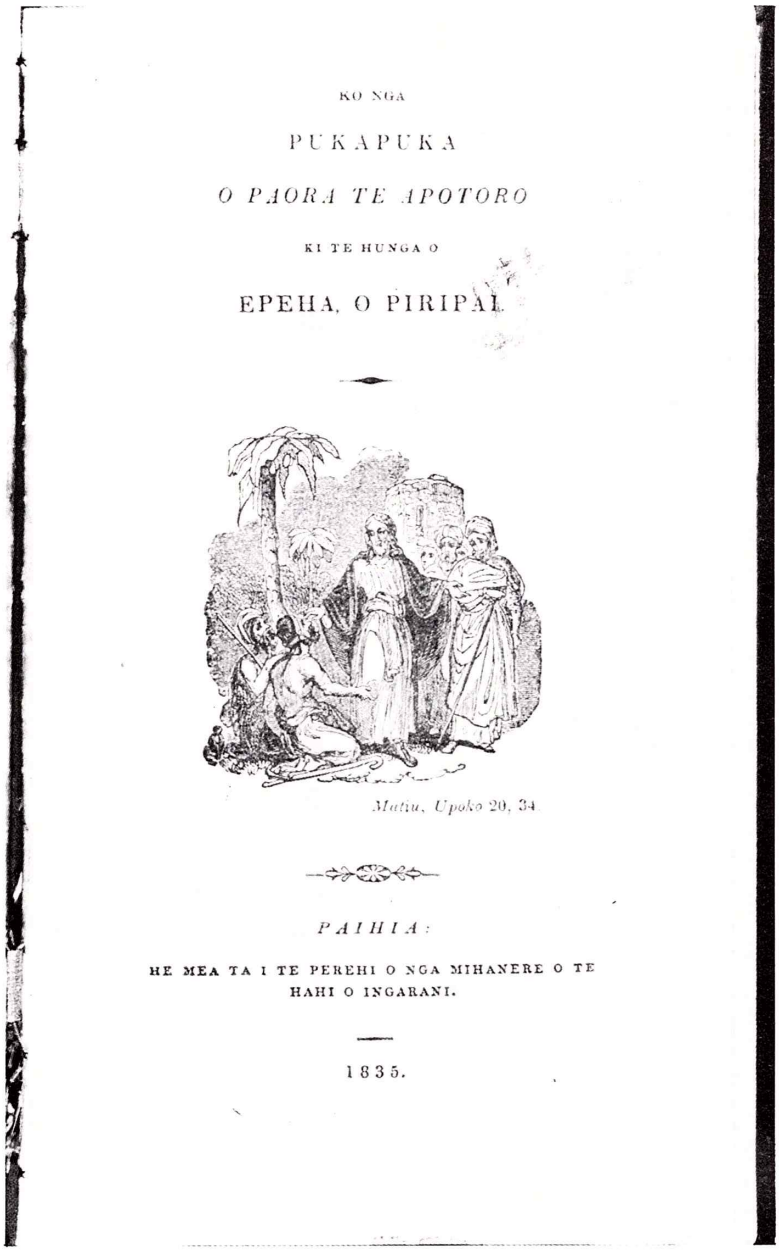


KO TE KATEKIHAMA III.

Ko wai tou ingoa?
Ko *Mea.*
Na wai koe i hua?
Na aku matua atua i taku iriiringa i hau i
Aha koia ou matua atua mou i reira?
I wakaae ratou ki nga mea e tono nei ki to'u
in goa. Na' kia wakarerea e hau te rewera me ana mea
katoa, nga mea wakapehapeha, me nga mea me e
noho tenei ao kino, me nga tini hia'ia kino o te
A kia wakapono hia e hau nga mea katoa o te wakapono
ki a te Karaiti. A kia wakaritea katoatia e hau te
tapu o te Atua me aana ture, kia pera tou ingoa ka
o taku oranga ake.
E kore ianei koe e mea me wakapono koe a me mea ia
ratou i mea ai mou?
Ae he pono; mo ta te Atua ka'ia, ka mo
hau. A e tino wakapaiatu ana hau ki to ta'o
i te rangi mona i karanga i hau ki tenei
Karaiti to tatou kai wakaora. A e in
te Atua kia ho mai tona kaha ki a hau kia mau tonu ai hau
ki tenei oranga, a mate noa.
Wakahuatia nga kupu o tou wakapono!
E wakapono ana hau ki te Atua te Ma
kaha rawa, te kai hanga i te rangi me te wenua; ki a
Ihu Karaiti ano hoki tana tamaiti ko ta'u to tatou Ariki,
i wakameatia e te Wairua Tapu, i waka wananga e te
wahine e Meri, mate iho i a Ponotio Pirato, ripekatia
a ia, mate rawa, tanumia ana, heke atu ana ia ki te rei
no te po toru i ara ake ai ia i te mate, kake atu ana ki
te rangi, tera te noho i te ringaringa matau o te Atua
te Matua kaha rawa; e ahu mai ia i reira ki te waka wa
i nga tangata ora me nga tangata mate. E waka pono

Ko te Katekihama III

The Third Catechism, printed in Maori by the missionary William Yate at Keri Keri in 1830. The first item (of six pages) to be printed in New Zealand, and one of two known copies. 175mm x 108mm. See also page 73.



KO NGA

PUKAPUKA

O PAORA TE APOTORO

KI TE HUNGA O

EPEHA, O PIRIPAI.

Matiu, Upoko 20, 34.

PAIHIA:

HE MEA TA I TE PEREHI O NGA MIHANERE O TE HAHI O INGARANI.

1835.

Ko te Rongo Pai i Tuhituhia e Ruka . . . o Epeha o Piripai

Translated and printed in Maori by the missionary William Colenso at Paihia in 1835. The first book to be printed in New Zealand. The illustration is from Matthew 20:34. 182mm x 103mm. See also pages 37, 73.

The tale of the Pardonere
With the ne With none other angry may
But right anone the worthy knyght began
Whan that he sawe that alle the people lough
No more of this for this is right ynough
Sir pardoner be mery and glade of chere
And ye sir hoost that be to me so dere
I pray you that ye kysse the pardonere
And pardoner I pray the drawe the nere
And as we dyd let Sclaughte and pley
Anone they kysse and ryden forth thire wey
Here endith the Pardoners tale
And begynneth the shipmannes tale
Marchaunte somtyme was at seint Denys
That riche was therfore men helde him wyse
A wyf he hadde of excellent beaute
And compenable and reuelous was she

The Canterbury Tales

By Geoffrey Chaucer, printed in English in London by Richard Pynson about 1493. The above woodcut accompanies the Pardoner's Tale. 267mm x 190mm. See also page 70.

generally unaware of the literary rarities and works of reference that Sir George had presented to the city.

J.A.W. Bennett, an Aucklander by birth, became a lecturer in English at Oxford University. Back in New Zealand on holiday in 1953, he recorded a radio talk on the Grey Collection. He told how he had set out in the mid-1930s on what he called "a medieval pilgrimage", like one of Chaucer's pilgrims. He was not, however, seeking holy shrines, but medieval books and medieval manuscripts. He recounted how his wanderings had taken him from Dublin to Durham, from Longleat to Lincoln, from the galleries of the Vatican in Rome to those of the Escorial in Spain. "And now," he said, "I have come back to New Zealand – to discover that, if rightly taught and directed, I might have learnt almost as much as I now know without going as far as Queen Street. And I suspect I am not the first New Zealander to have looked wistfully towards the sumless treasures of Europe's art and literature as if they lay altogether out of reach here: I have met my fellow countrymen – and, more often, my fellow countrywomen – patiently plodding through learned libraries, or gazing with glazed eye at showcase after showcase in the Bodleian or the British Museum. We might all have done better, and learnt more, by staying at home and taking the tram to Auckland Public Library." [44]

The wonder was, as Jack Bennett commented, that in a life so full of wars, politics and government, Grey was able to accumulate so many thousands of books. Clearly volumes of the kind he had collected were not part of the baggage of the pioneer immigrants. Nor were they the type of literature to be found in the Auckland bookshops of Chapman or Upton. It seems that while in Cape Town and later in Auckland, Grey had regularly received the catalogues of the antiquarian booksellers of Britain, and had written to firms like Boon of Bond Street to have his choices sent out by ship. For the rare items, he was obviously in regular correspondence with the specialists in London. In August 1892, for example, he was writing to Bernard Quaritch:

> My dear Quaritch,
>
> I hope you are well – most indefatigeable man as you are. In your catalogue no. 124 Page 71 no 712 is described as a copy of Shakespeare's first edition 1623. £85 if unsold. Could you send it to me. I am anxious to purchase it.
>
> Wishing you all good luck, yours very truly, – G. Grey.

What Grey had done was to accumulate, over many years, a "gentleman's library". Collecting it at such range he could never have hoped that it would be comprehensive as to any one subject. It was probably true, as Rutherford wrote, that though he valued scholarship, Grey was not by habit scholarly; that he collected books, but did not study them much. However, his generosity set in motion a series of public benefactions that have been a marked feature of the civic life of Auckland, and which continue to the present-day.

Grey had wanted the books he was giving to Auckland to be distributed throughout the library. It was only when the officials of the council assured him that it was the wish

of citizens that the collection remain intact and be placed in a separate room to be known as the Grey Collection, that he somewhat reluctantly consented.

Sir George was a man of deep religious convictions. He knew that the real sources of medieval glory were religious, that most of the manuscripts and early printings of the period were of religious subjects. They were also, of course, remarkable guides to the thought and life of the middle ages and to the time of the Tudors.

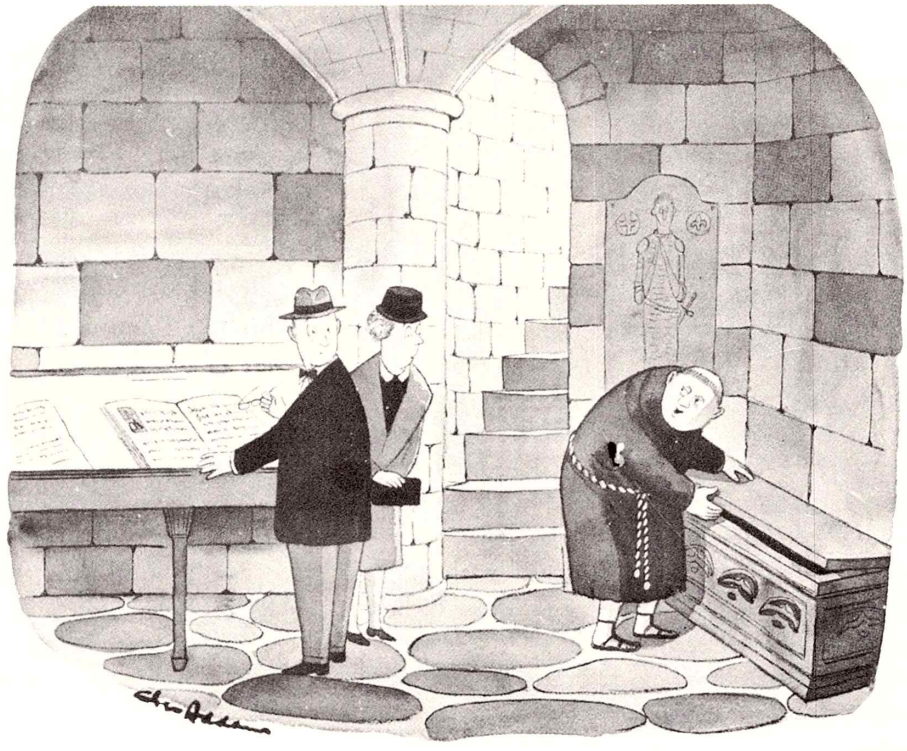
Thanks largely to Grey, there are in the Auckland Public Library almost twice as many manuscripts as in the rest of New Zealand put together. The 34 in his collection range in time from the 11th century to the 17th century; in language from Greek to Ethiopic; and in beauty from those with crude illustrations in red and black, to others gorgeous in their profusion of border decoration of flowers, fruit and birds in the bright colours and burnished gold of the illuminated (or ornamented) manuscripts of the 15th century.

The two most ancient manuscripts in the Grey Collection are in Greek and date from the 11th or 12th centuries. *Lectionarium Graecum* (*Lessons from the Gospels*) is written on 165 leaves of vellum (a fine kind of parchment prepared from the skins of calves, kids or lambs). It is bound in old wooden boards encased in dark brown leather covers. Its capital letters and some ornamentation are in red and black in the early Byzantine style. A note in Grey's handwriting, attached to the manuscript and dated 16 June 1865, reads; "Not quite complete. The last seven leaves belong apparently to a more ancient ms."

Its companion piece, *Evangelium IV, Graece (The Four Gospels)* is of 199 leaves of vellum bound in late 19th century dark brown morocco, blind-stamped. Its capitals are done in red, and there are two drawings (of St Matthew and St Luke) in red and black with, once again, some ornamentation in the same colours and in the old Byzantine style. The date, 1128, appears on the right-hand page of the last leaf. Henry Shaw believed that this *Evangelium* and the probably earlier *Lectionarium* came originally from one of the monasteries of Mt Athos, from whose high, rocky eminence women are excluded even today. The manuscripts are the only ancient Greek ones known to exist in New Zealand.

Two noblewomen commissioned the magnificent *Biblia Sacra Latina*. First written as four volumes, but later bound as two, this Bible is in Latin, written in a Gothic letter on vellum. Each of its 710 leaves is in double column, 40 lines to a column. Its capital letters and initials are in gold and colours. The inscription in each volume tells us that the Bible was written at the expense of two un-named ladies of nobility for the use of the Sisters of the Dominican Monastery at Duerstaden in the Duchy of Brunswick (a city of Lower Saxony, now in West Germany), about the year 1419 A.D.

De Consolatione Philosophiae is a manuscript deriving from the famous philosophical work of the last great Roman writer to understand Greek, Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c475-524 A.D.) A note in Grey's handwriting on its first blank leaf reads; "This (translation) was executed in 1300 by Jehan de Meun at the order of Philip le Fair



"It's an unusually rare fourteenth-century manuscript, and over here we think we have the author."

Drawing by Chas. Addams; 1963 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

(Philip IV, King of France)." The manuscript is on vellum in French and on 126 leaves, with capitals illuminated in gold and colours, and with one miniature painting. (In regard to manuscripts, "miniature" has nothing to do with size; the term derives from the Latin for "red paint".) Apparently, the manuscript belonged once to the Baron de Rosny, since it contains his bookplate. It later became the property of the Duc de Sully, the Baron's son. A further note by Grey reads: "Sully was the son of the Baron de Rosny, who foretold that if the marriage of Henri IV with Margaret . . . was celebrated at Paris, the liveries would be blood red. The marriage was celebrated on the 16 August 1572, the massacre of St Bartholomew was perpetrated on the 24 August 1572."

Arguably the finest of the library's illuminated manuscripts is the 15th century *Missale Romanum*. It is in two volumes. In total there are 573 leaves of fine vellum, written in Latin in a large Gothic letter in red and black. It has four full-page miniatures with borders profusely decorated in gold and colours. Also depicted in gold leaf are a cross

and an armorial shield supported by an angel. There are, as well, 64 smaller miniatures and over 200 leaves with decorative borders and illuminated capitals throughout. The manuscript is bound in dark morocco, gilt-tooled and with decorated edges. A clipping from an unidentified sale catalogue attached to the volume states: "This fine ms is presumed to have been executed for a bishop of Besancon, the pastoral cross and a coat of arms being frequently introduced in the borders, but the latter has been invariably obliterated."

Pope Gregory I (The Great) lived from about 540 to 604 A.D. Sent as papal nuncio to Constantinople, he wrote his *Moralia* (an exposition of *Job*) during the three years he was there. The manuscript of the *Moralia* in the Grey Collection is by an unknown scribe of the 14th century. It is written in Latin in a Gothic letter on 315 leaves of vellum, and with some decorative capitals in colour.

Lectionarium Cum Calendario is a large 15th century manuscript of great beauty. It is of 390 leaves of vellum, in Latin in a Gothic letter, and has illuminated capitals in gold and colours, many of them adorned with figures. The lectionary consists of directions and reading for the services of all Sundays, feast-days and different offices to be performed in the Roman Catholic Church throughout the year. It is known that the manuscript belonged formerly to the Duke of Sussex, uncle of Queen Victoria.

Of all the manuscripts in the Grey Collection, one that inevitably catches the eye of the visitor, if only because of its sheer size, is *Antiphonale Sacrosanctae Romanae Ecclesiae*; measuring 62cm by 41cm, it is the largest manuscript in New Zealand. It is an early 15th century musical service book of the Roman Catholic Church, written in Latin on vellum in a large Gothic letter. The manuscript is in its original binding of wooden boards, covered with thick brown leather heavily studded with copper nails. An antiphonal is a choir book, containing the introits and other anthems sung on the various festivals of the church. Making the manuscript so large would allow members of the choir to gather around and use the same copy. Unlike most antiphonals this one has not a note of musical score anywhere in it.

The favourite manuscript of many who come to look at the rare book collection in the Auckland Public Library is *Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis*. It, too, is in Latin in Gothic letter, and fills 109 leaves of vellum. In all there are 25 large miniatures, surrounded by borders of leaves, fruits and flowers, each of them brilliantly illuminated in gold and colours. This splendidly preserved *Sarum Prymer*, or *Book of Hours*, was written about the middle of the 15th century, and adapted for use by members of the Roman Catholic Church in the west of Scotland. We know that for a long time the book was in the possession of the Colquhoun family in the parish of Luss near Loch Lomond. Moreover, that it was used by the family in the small church of St Mary which today stands roofless near the Colquhoun mansion at Rossdhu. David McRoberts has sketched the scene in an article in the *Innes Review*; "Pictures of the period enable us to reconstruct the morning routine at Rossdhu in the late 15th century. As the mass-bells rang out over

the waters of Loch Lomond, my Lady and her retinue would walk sedately from the castle to the kirk. The page would carry the Book of Hours, wrapped in its rich cloth cover, and when my Lady knelt at her prie-dieu in the kirk, he would place the open book before her, doff his cap and withdraw. My Lady would then settle down to her devotions." [45]

By the middle of the 15th century, scribes employed as copyists were becoming more and more aware that they could not keep up with the increasing demand for manuscript books. It was even said that one of them, growing weary of his task, wrote desperately in the margin of a manuscript: "Date vinum scriptori." ("Give the scribe a drink of wine!") [46]

Relief for them came in the form of books printed from movable type. The first dated example was a papal indulgence, printed at Mainz, in Germany, in 1454. The first book to carry a date was a psalter, printed by Johannes Fust and Peter Schoeffer on the press of Johann Gutenberg, also in Mainz, in 1457.

Gutenberg's *Mazarin Bible* (so named because a copy was found in the library of Mazarin, the French cardinal-statesman, 1602-61), is generally regarded as the first book to have been printed in Europe from movable metal type. It was produced not later than 1455. The Auckland Public Library is not fortunate enough to have a copy of Gutenberg's *Bible*, but it does have a facsimile reproduction of it.

It was thought for many years that the two-volume *Biblia Sacra Latina*, in the Grey Collection, was the actual manuscript that Gutenberg had had in front of him more than 500 years ago when he was designing type for his famous *Bible*. The manuscript in the Auckland Public Library is so clean and fresh, though, as to make its use in any printing office highly unlikely. Holding up one of the two facsimile volumes of the Gutenberg *Bible* when he was in the library in 1949, Father Celsus Kelly commented; "When the scribes saw this miracle of the printer's art, a book of surpassing beauty clad in classical finish, supreme excellence and flawless perfection, they knew the days of their honourable profession were numbered." [47] Probably no fewer than 40,000 editions of books were printed between 1445 and the end of 1500. Such books are spoken of, generally, as incunabula (from the Latin meaning infancy). Taking 500 as an average edition, there must have been upwards of the astonishing total of 20 million books printed in the second half of the 15th century. And as Latin was then the language of the scholar, the universities, the monasteries and the church, 75% of all books printed pre-1501 were in Latin.

Sir George Grey presented some 36 volumes of incunabula to the Auckland Public Library. The earliest of them is *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, the work of the first printer in the German city of Augsburg, Gunther Zainer, about 1471. A first edition, it still looks remarkably like a manuscript, with the Gothic letters rubricated (distinctively coloured) in red and blue, with capitals in red, blue and green, and illustrated with 192 woodcuts coloured by a contemporary hand.

Other famous German printers represented in the Grey Collection are Johann Mentelin, Johann Gruninger, Anton Koberger and Peter Schoeffer. From Italy there is work from Aldus Manutius, the designer of beautiful founts of type; from Switzerland, Michael Wenssler; from Holland, Jacob Jacobs; from France, Ulrich Gering; and from England, William Caxton and Richard Pynson.

To have one of the works of England's first printer would be distinction enough for most libraries. Thanks to Grey, Auckland has three. The most rare of them is Caxton's version of Virgil's *Aeneid*, of 86 leaves, the text of which ends with this colophon: "Here fynyssheth the boke yf Eneydos compyled by Vyrgyle whiche hathe he translated oute of latyne into frenshe. And oute of frenshe reduced into Englysshe by me Wyllm Caxton the XXII day of Juyn, the yere of our lorde MIIII CLXXXX. The fythe yere of the Regne of Kynge Henry the seventh." Printed probably at Westminster about 1490, it is a fine, complete copy, one of only 22 believed to be in existence in 1908. Gavin Douglas (c1474-1522), also a translator of the *Aeneid*, dismissed Caxton's "reducing" of the classical legend from the French as "no more like Virgil than St Augustine is like the Devil!" [48]

Visitors to the rare book room of the library may well like to test the truth of Douglas's comment. There, they may also read – in English – Caxton's translations and printings of two other works. His *Polychronicon*, a 450-leaf volume without a date or a place of publication, would seem to have originated with Roger Monk, of St Werberg monastery in Chester. In the early years of the 14th century, Monk had made a compilation in Latin from some old chronicles. Ralph Higden, of the same monastery, amplified the compilation and named it *Polychronicon*. In 1387, Trevisa, Chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, translated the work into English prose. Nearly a century after that, Caxton somewhat revised the text and continued it up to the year 1460. He published the work towards the end of 1482.

The third Caxton is *The Golden Legend (Lives of the Saints)*, with the text revised and edited by Caxton himself, and thought to have been published in 1484. The first part of the volume contains an abridgment of the Old Testament and, curiously, Caxton has translated Genesis iii 7: "They knewe than that they were naked and than they toke fygge leves and sowed them togyder for to couer theyr membres in maner of breches," thus forestalling the famous *Breeches Bible* of 1560. In 1908 it was estimated that there were no more than 30 copies of *The Golden Legend* in public libraries and private collections throughout the world.

A series of woodcuts are a feature of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, printed by one of Caxton's successors, Richard Pynson, in London about 1493. Spaces were left by the printer for the insertion of decorated initial letters. These were evidently completed by a much later hand, for the style is out of character with the printing. Attractive as they are, the woodcuts give point to the decline in the standard of illustration once books ceased to be produced by scribes. As Jack Bennett put it: "The tradition of fine

decoration had originated in the monastic scriptoria; and when Henry VIII rose up in his wrath and sat with his not inconsiderable weight on the monasteries, he destroyed the oldest abiding places of English art." [49]

One of the curiosities of the pre-1501 printings in the Grey Collection is *Ars Moriendi (The Art of Dying)*, a block book believed to have been produced about 1480. A small volume of 14 leaves, it is made up entirely of woodcuts illustrating the temptations which beset the person dying, the angelic inspirations needed to resist them, and finally the last agony. Block books were said to have had an enormous popularity during the 15th century.

Curious woodcuts are also a feature of a 1499 printing by Johann Gruninger of *Comediae Sex (Six Comedies)* of Publius Terentius (i.e. Terence c190-159 B.C.). One of its woodcuts is of a theatre of the 15th century, with the players on the stage and the audience on two levels above them.

The value and intrinsic beauty of Grey's gift extends, of course, beyond the collections of manuscripts and incunabula. A Fleming, Wynkyn de Worde, purchased Caxton's business and moved it from the area of Westminster Abbey to Fleet Street. Shrewder as a business-man (Jack Bennett called him "the Penguin publisher of his day"), and better as a craftsman than Caxton, he also printed *The Golden Legend*. Grey bought a copy of the 1527 edition and presented it to the library. Thanks also to Grey, the library was the owner, from 1887, of the *First* (1623), *Second* (1632) and *Fourth* (1685) *Folios Shakespeare*. The purchase by the library some 30 years ago of the *Third Folio* (1663-1664), which it had had on long-term loan, completed the cornerstone of its extensive holdings of Shakesperiana. The *First Folio* (or edition) of 1623, was the one referred to earlier in correspondence between Grey and Bernard Quaritch in London. A census carried out in 1906 found that, of the 1,000 or so copies of the *First Folio* believed to have been printed, no more than 178 remained in existence.

In 1927 the library was made aware of two more valuable items in the Grey Collection which had been misplaced some time before. The first was a wash drawing by the English poet, painter and engraver, William Blake (1757-1827), which had been stored in an obscure corner of the building. The title of the drawing is "Lot and His Daughters", and an inscription in pencil on the mount tells how the inspiration for it came to Blake. The second discovery relates also to Blake, and was of even more importance. On a shelf, long neglected, and in a book of designs by Blake, were found original copies of his prophetic poems *America* and *Europe*. Inside, Grey had written: "I purchased this book at the sale of a deceased artist (I forget his name) who obtained it direct from the designer."

If Sir George Grey's niece was wrong about the manuscripts and early printings as having no interest for Aucklanders, she was doubly in error about the items he presented concerning New Zealanders. Few contemporary and early books and pamphlets about this country failed to reach the shelves of Grey's library. The result is a valuable working

collection in manuscript and printed form covering almost every aspect of New Zealand life – historical, literary, social, political and economic.

In addition to the thousands of letters received by Grey from influential New Zealanders, there is a most comprehensive series of British Parliamentary Papers relating to this country, and a range of early New Zealand newspapers believed to be unrivalled in any other library.

One unusual item among many in the Grey Collection is the musical score in manuscript of the New Zealand national hymn, "God Defend New Zealand," which was written as a poem in the early 1870s by Thomas Bracken.

Bracken was at that time the editor of the *Saturday Advertiser*, Dunedin. In that paper in 1875 he published the words, offering a prize of ten guineas for the best music setting.

Three leading musicians from Australia, each judging independently, had no hesitation in awarding the prize to John Joseph Woods, a school teacher at Lawrence, Otago.

A letter in the Grey manuscript collection from Bracken to Woods, dated 17 September 1877, reads;

> Dear Sir,
> I hereby give you the sole right to print and publish the New Zealand National Hymn "God Defend New Zealand".
> I resign the copyright into your hands from this date to use in whatever manner you please.
> I am Dear Sir, faithfully yours, – Thomas Bracken.

The song was published under the title, "National Anthem, God Defend New Zealand," and Woods sent a manuscript music score to Sir George Grey in Wellington in August 1878.

For the best part of 70 years it was presumed that Woods' original manuscript was filed in London, the one that had been taken by the prime minister, Richard John Seddon, to England at the time of a colonial conference in 1897, for presentation to Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

In 1944, however, a sharp-eyed member of the Auckland Public Library staff noted in the margin of the manuscript in the Grey Collection this inscription: "Woodville, Lawrence – This is the only Manuscript copy of the New Zealand National Anthem extant written by me As published in London John J. Woods."

John Barr's comment at the time was that other manuscript copies might have been made, but in view of the composer's note on the copy in the Auckland library, it was fair to assume that this was the authentic authorised original.

Not surprisingly, considering his deep interest in the culture and social well-being of the Maori people, Grey had put together an extensive collection of manuscript items, including their language, tribal genealogies, poems, chants, traditional stories and narratives of chiefs. And the collection of printed Maori books and booklets which he

presented to the city is one of the three largest in existence. (The others are in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, and in Sydney's Mitchell Library.)

Thanks to Grey, the Auckland Public Library has one of only two copies known to exist of the first item – a booklet as opposed to a book – to be printed in New Zealand. This is *Ko te Katekihama* (*The Third Catechism*), printed by the Rev W. Yate on a Church Missionary Society press in Keri Keri in 1830.

Mention has already been made of one of the library's two copies of the first book to be produced in this country. That was William Colenso's translation and printing, in Maori, of *The Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians* and *The Gospel According to St Luke*, carried out on a Church Missionary Society press at Paihia, in 1835. As Grey had reminded his audience at the Theatre Royal in 1883, it had been with a copy of this work that the first Maori martyr, Retimona (Richmond), had tried to defend himself when he was killed at Otakere in 1835.

Grey had also told that audience how he had come to possess one or two of his books of Maori grammar. Apparently only one copy of a new grammar in Maori by Dr E. Norris had been printed in 1842 before the type was mistakenly lifted. No other copy could be taken off, and the item became what is known as a unicum. Norris gave the grammar to a friend, a professor in Germany. Grey, determined that Auckland would have a copy of every grammar relating to New Zealand, asked the German for it. The reply was that the grammar, being a unicum, was of such value he did not want to part with it.

Grey's response was to find an intermediary, in the person of Christian Bunsen, the German ambassador in London. The ambassador's approach to the professor produced a generous result. If, he said, Sir George Grey would send him a little Cape wine which he could place on his table when he gave dinners to his friends, and tell the story of how he parted with his book, then he would be disposed to give it up. Grey told the professor that he would send him some of the best South African wine that could be procured. "I had a selection of such wines made and forwarded to him. He sent the book to me, beautifully bound in red morocco."

The remaining section of the Sir George Grey Collection to call for special mention, is that comprising some 3,000 autograph letters. Over the years they had come to Grey from a wide circle of correspondents, including those famous in politics, literature, art and the sciences. Queen Victoria had written to him, as had William Ewart Gladstone, Thomas Carlyle and Lord Melbourne, David Livingstone and Florence Nightingale, Lord Nelson and Victoria's Consort, Prince Albert.

Of the 15,000 volumes in the Auckland Public Library on opening day in March 1887, 8,000 had been given by Grey. By the time of his death, in 1898, the number of volumes donated by him (exclusive of the 3,000 autograph letters) was some 14,000. With the disposal of his two comprehensive collections to libraries in Cape Town and Auckland, some books and manuscripts relating to the Maori and Polynesian peoples had found

A place for everything and everything in its place. Books and busts, and bentwood chairs drawn up to tables of solid kauri, in a 1901 view of the reference department looking east to the doors opening into Albert Park. Auckland Public Library

their way to South Africa; others, to do more with the African continent, had remained in New Zealand. Apparently it had been Grey's original intention to bequeath his entire library to South Africa. His subsequent long residence in New Zealand and the accumulation of so much material about this country, caused him to change his mind. By 1923 an exchange of material between the libraries of Cape Town and Auckland was completed – down to the spade with which Sir George had turned the first sod on the South African railway, and which must have been overlooked on Kawau.

Only Tom Osborne, who packed them, would have known what the first book of Grey's was which he saw "placed in its new and permanent home" that 29 December 1886. And he certainly did not consider it worth while recording in his diary. We do know, however, that the last gift made personally by Sir George was the Edinburgh edition of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson had met Grey in Auckland in February 1893. He later wrote to a friend: "I have seen a good deal of Sir George Grey;

What a wonderful old historic figure to be walking on your arm and recalling ancient events and instances!" And, referring to the recent troubles in Samoa, Stevenson went on: "It makes a man small, and yet the extent to which he approved what I had done – or rather had tried to do – encouraged me. Sir George is an expert at least, he knows these races: he is not a small employé with an inkpot and a Whitaker." [50]

11

THE SHAW COLLECTION

IN TALKING of the Auckland Public Library's collection of manuscripts and early printed books, librarians more often than not link the name of Grey with that of Shaw, the brothers Henry and Fred. The better-known of them was Henry. An accountant, he had invested successfully in the Waiotahi goldmine at "the Thames", and was briefly (1910-11) a self-effacing city councillor who, as a labour of love, re-organised the bookkeeping system at the town hall. A bachelor with bookish interests, Henry Shaw had presented the library with some 150 volumes as early as May 1904. Eleven years later he gave another 450. Appointed in 1913 as one of the two curators of the Sir George Grey Collection (the other was Edward Shillington who had retired from the position of librarian the same year), Henry Shaw kept on collecting to such good effect that, by the time of his death in 1928, he had given over 2,300 volumes to the library.

Unlike Grey's, the Henry Shaw Collection contains no items of importance relating to New Zealand, nor any autograph letters. It does, however, include 33 European manuscripts, ranging from the 13th to the 16th centuries, nearly half of them in Latin. There are, as well, some beautiful examples of Oriental illumination, in which the Grey Collection is deficient. One is a Koran in a rare Indian binding, written on 758 leaves of glazed paper and with covers painted both inside and out with floral decoration.

Grey had presented the city with 36 books printed before the year 1501. From Henry Shaw were to come another 65. One of them is the oldest printing in the Auckland Public Library. It is *De Civitate Dei*, a profound and masterly vindication of the Christian church, produced by St Augustine between the years 413-426 A.D. The Latin-language copy in the Shaw Collection was printed in Strassburg by Johann Mentelin in the year 1467.

Henry Shaw, 1850-1928, donor with his brother Fred Shaw, 1849-1927, of the Shaw Collection.

Other notable printers of the 15th century represented in the Henry Shaw incunables are the Germans Adolf Rusch, Johann Gruninger, Johann Pruss, Ulrich Zell, Anton Sorg and Anton Koberger; the Swiss Berthold Ruppel, Michael Wenssler and Johann Amerbach; and the Italians Ulrich Han and Nicolaus Jenson. The collection is also noteworthy for its printings from the 16th century, and its large group of what are known as Grangerised books – books which have been illustrated with plates and title-pages taken from others. The outstanding example is the *Edinburgh Folio Shakespeare*, to which Henry Shaw added over 3,000 illustrations.

The first instalment of the Fred Shaw Collection came to the library in 1913 and consisted of over 900 volumes. Another 500 were made available after his death in 1927, and a further 50 when his widow died soon afterwards. The strength of the Fred Shaw Collection is in English drama, although it does include more than a hundred volumes of music and literature relating to music. And the eight volumes in his collection of books printed before the year 1501, took the number of incunabula in the Auckland Library to 111.

As Jack Bennett reminded his radio listeners in 1953, it is not only those interested in antiquities who like to look at old books in old scripts on old vellum. Language and dynasty and religion have all changed over the centuries, but some of the old bonds with

the medieval world are not all yet broken. "It was not conservative antiquarians," Bennett said, "or dons steeped in port and prejudice who, in the 19th century, turned men's minds once again to the Middle Ages." It was men like John Ruskin, who began as a painter and became a political economist, and William Morris, who was first a poet and later a Socialist, who accepted, as Bennett put it, "that a consciousness of the past is necessary to a true living of the present".

12

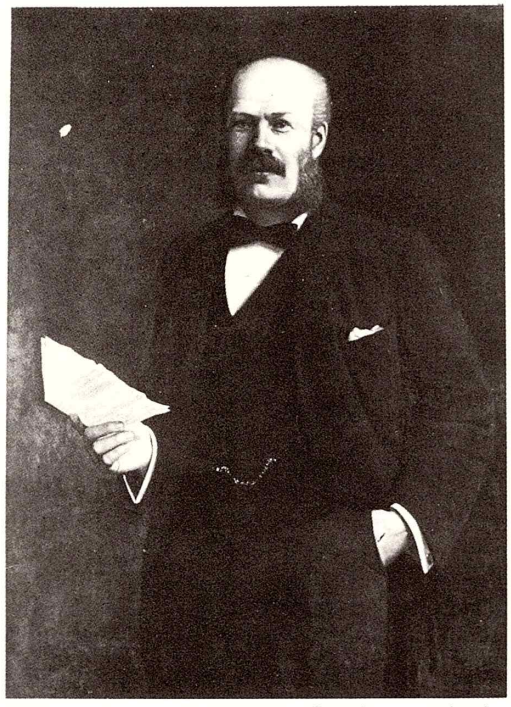
THE LEYS INSTITUTE

AS THE POPULATION of Auckland increased (between 1891 and 1911 it rose from 28,613 to 40,536), thoughts in the city council turned towards extending library services to the suburbs. Before he retired in 1913, Shillington would see the first branch of the Auckland Public Library operating in Mt Eden Road.

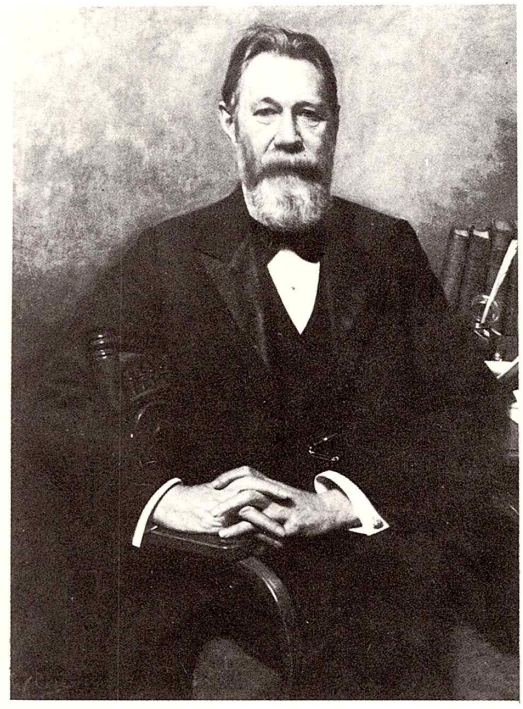
The honour of having the earliest library service outside the city belongs, however, not to Grafton but to Ponsonby. In 1859, the year in which he delivered his address to the Mechanics' Institute, Ferdinand von Hochstetter released a remarkable map showing the extinct volcanoes on the isthmus of Auckland. Across the area west of Freemans Bay he wrote; "Sterile clay soil."

That was how the scientist saw it. It was certainly not the way William Leys was to envisage life in Ponsonby in the late 19th century. As his brother, Thomson Wilson Leys, recalled; "He frequently said to me during our walks, that while the Government spent enormous sums of money upon education, practically nothing was done to encourage boys and girls to continue the good work when they leave school, often at very early ages. He pointed to knots of boys recently from school loitering in the vicinity of the Three Lamps, rapidly losing the good effects which the mental and moral discipline of school had impressed upon their characters. And he would remark that many of the cottages these boys lived in were small and overcrowded, and that, in a climate like ours, the streets offered an almost irresistible temptation. The wish to do something to combine instruction with rational recreation was always fresh in his mind."[51]

A bookbinder, William Leys, died in October 1899. He left an estate valued at £5,723 ($11,446), most of which was invested in property in the Ponsonby district. Having provided annuities for his wife and daughter, Leys directed that the income from his



William Leys, 1852-1899, founder, with his brother, Thomson Wilson Leys, of the Leys Institute, Ponsonby. Portrait by Ellen von Meyern

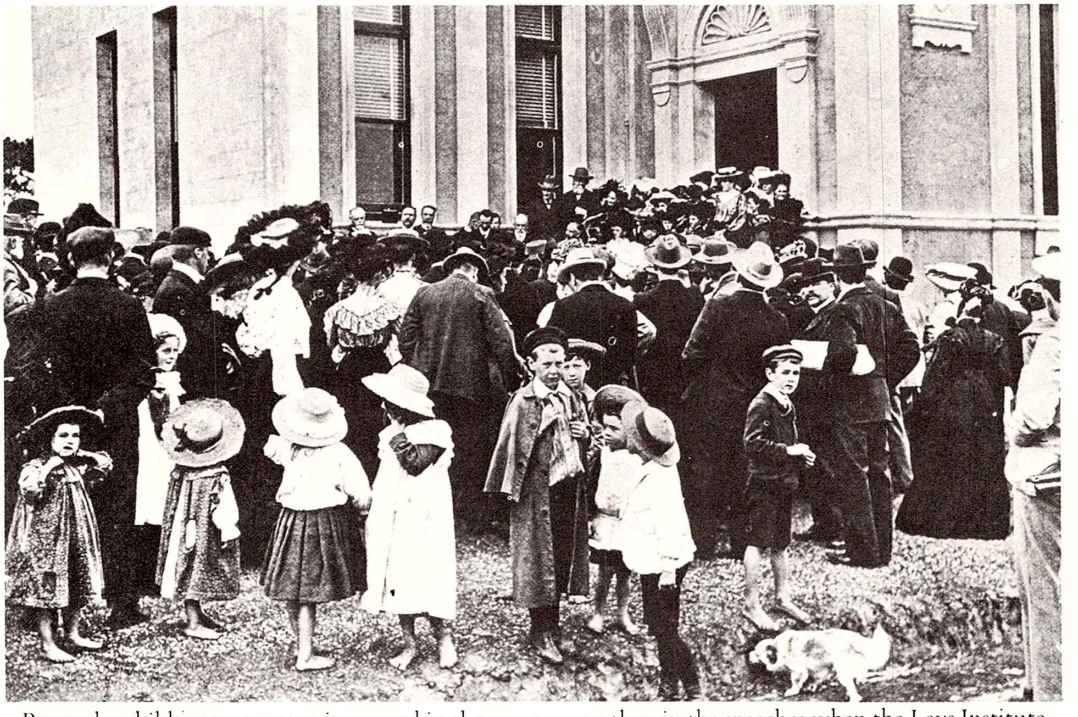


Thomson Wilson Leys, 1850-1924, co-founder with his brother, William, and generous benefactor of the Leys Institute. Portrait by C. F. Goldie

estate should accumulate until it was sufficient to erect a brick building in Ponsonby costing not less than £2,000 ($4,000) and equipped as a free library and mechanics' institute.

When it was realised that the bequest would fall far short of the sum needed, and with the local residents pressing for a library and reading room, Thomson Wilson Leys offered help. If the Auckland City Council would provide a suitable site, he would meet half the cost of putting up and equipping the building, as well as providing it with a library. The other half would come from his brother's bequest. Even so, Thomson Wilson Leys would himself have to advance the sum of £300 ($600) to the Trustees to enable them to fulfil their part of the bargain. The agreement with the council was signed on 26 May 1904, and the two-storeyed institute in St Marys Road, ornate in its Victorian baroque, was opened by the mayor of Auckland Edwin (later Sir Edwin) Mitchelson, on 29 March 1905. It cost £3,234 ($6,468) to erect and furnish.

On the ground floor was the library, under the control of Miss A. M. Williams; upstairs were a recreation room, a hall, and a small room for committee meetings. Initially the bookstock was 5,418, boosted by another 1,000 or so volumes transferred



Ponsonby children were more interested in the cameraman than in the speeches when the Leys Institute library was opened on 29 March 1905. Auckland Public Library

as duplicates from the Auckland Public Library. (A bequest of £1,000 ($2,000) from the estate of a well-known nurseryman, William Mason, supplemented by smaller donations again from mainly the Leys family, enabled a gymnasium to be built alongside the library in 1906.) The seed sown by William Leys had fallen on ground more fertile by far than ever von Hochstetter imagined. Over the years, men as famous as Sir Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), Sir Truby King, Sir Joseph Ward and Sir Robert Stout addressed meetings in the institute (religion was the one topic taboo in the building); groups as diverse as the Ponsonby Literary and Debating Society, the Ponsonby Swimming and Life-Saving Club, the Wireless Club, the local Boy Scouts troop, and the Ponsonby Shakespeare and Dramatic Club were formed in it or used it as their headquarters; and the Leys Institute Orchestra, founded in 1912, has performed there down to the present day, save for a period when it was in recess between 1936 and 1965.

Leys Institute is unique in public libraries in New Zealand. Unique, too, has been the close personal contact and support given it by the Leys family. In 1908, a new lending department was opened, the gift of T. W. Leys, who was editor of the *Auckland Star* for nearly 45 years, and the driving force behind the institute for more than 20.

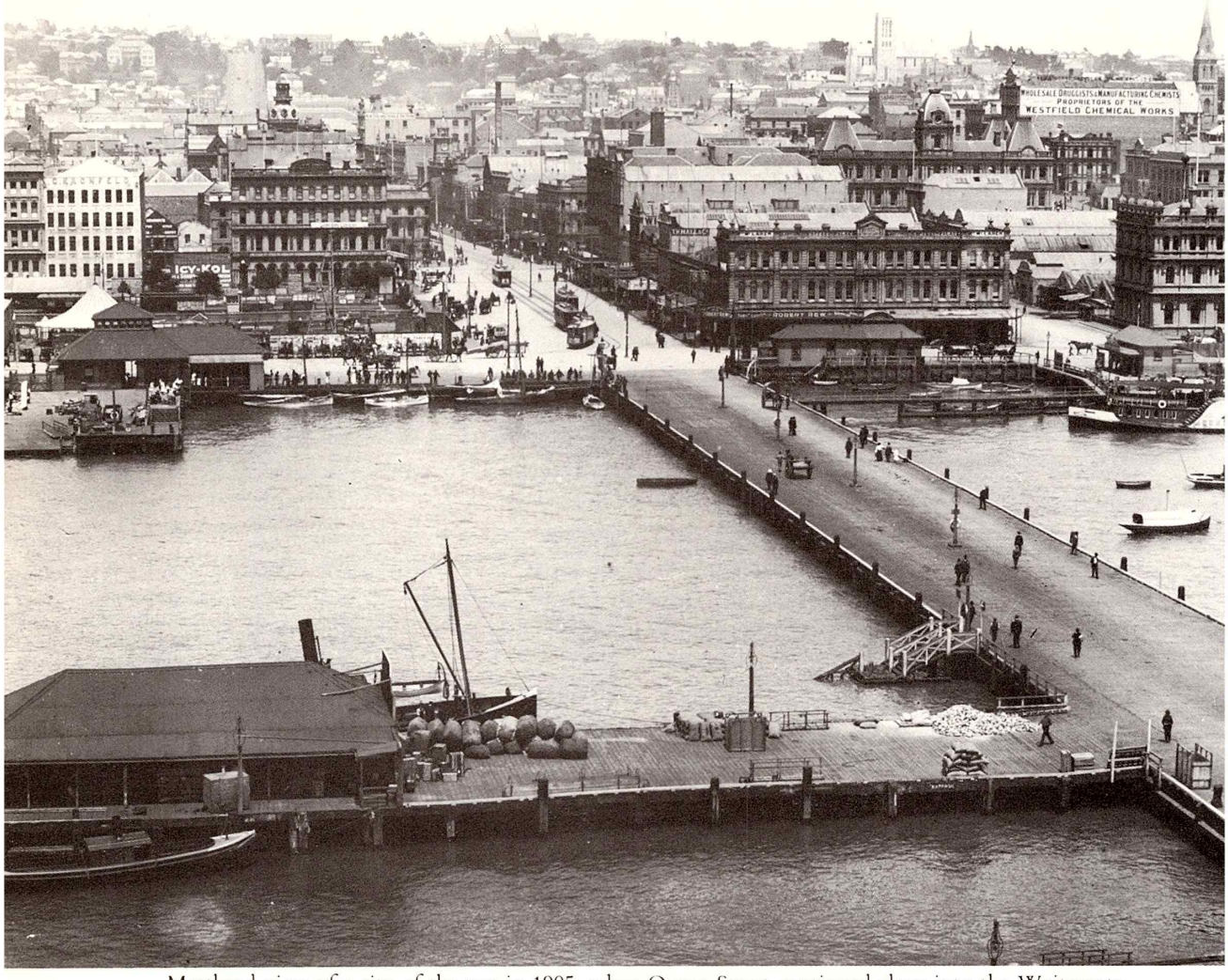
Outwardly little altered since it opened in 1905, the Leys Institute library is still a dominant feature of Auckland city's western skyline in 1980. Auckland Public Library

Extensions to the department were made in 1922, and again in 1939. The cost on the latter occasion was shared equally by the city council and T. W. Leys' daughter, Mrs Winifred Upton, and his son, Sir Cecil Leys. In May 1945, Sir Cecil established the Albertland Trust of £1,000 ($2,000) to provide a fund for buying books of a scientific and technical nature. A month later, he was to set up the Leys Institute Building and Library Endowment Trust, naming members of the family as trustees. And, in 1960, came a bequest of £1,000 ($2,000) from Mrs Winifred Upton to buy reference books.

The first public library in either Australia or New Zealand to be devoted entirely to children had been started in the institute as early as 1909. It held some 554 volumes, all of them donated by T. W. Leys. Its remarkable record of service to the young people of Ponsonby and Herne Bay was expanded dramatically in the years that followed. In 1959, and in terms of the will of Sir Cecil Leys, a handsome addition was made to the original building, and given the name of the Hilary Leys Memorial Wing in memory of his wife. It cost more than £12,000 ($24,000) to build, furnish and equip with books solely for the use of children. In the early 1960s, about forty per cent of the 1,300 or so children enrolled as members of the institute library were either Maoris or Pacific Islanders. Naturally enough, many of them were slow to learn to read in English. It was mainly for them that £2,000 ($4,000) from the Building and Endowments Trust was put towards buying some hundreds of books to form the "Improvers' Collection". By the time of a further grant of £1,000 ($2,000) to the collection in 1966, the children's section of the institute with its accompanying visual aids like television, slide projectors and record players, was the envy of most others in the country. A third generous donation of $4,000 in 1968 from the trustees of the Memorial Wing, plus the promise of $250 a year to maintain it, made possible the setting up a collection of remedial readers for children.

From the time of its opening in 1905, the Leys Institute had been controlled by a committee of management, comprising representatives of the various trusts established by the Leys family, borrowers' representatives, and representatives of the Auckland City Council. It had been stipulated in the founder's will that, once the institute was built and furnished, it was to be conveyed to the Auckland City Council. Thereafter, the trustees were to pay the council £100 ($200) annually towards its upkeep out of the income from the estate. The capital was to be held in trust until the death of the last beneficiary under the will. At that time, the whole of the property and income would be handed over to the Auckland City Council for the upkeep of the institute. In July 1963 the last of William Leys' beneficiaries, a nephew, died. Thus the Leys Institute passed to the control of the Auckland City Council on 18 February 1964. It had served Auckland and, in particular, Ponsonby splendidly for more than 60 years.

And 16 years after their active participation in the affairs of the institute ceased, members of the family which had been its very life-blood, have continued to enrich the well-being of what is probably the most cosmopolitan and stimulating community in



Masthead view of a city of the seas in 1905, when Queen Street continued clean into the Waitemata Harbour, paddle steamers from the North Shore services pulled up to Quay Street and the trains came right into town. Auckland Public Library

the urban area of Auckland. Hearing in 1975, for example, of the course in adult literacy being conducted locally by the Workers' Educational Association, they made it possible for the institute to buy 1,000 titles suitable for adults with reading difficulties. The accent in this "New Readers' Collection" was to be on the Polynesian peoples and their culture.

John Reid, professor of English at the University of Auckland, summed up the unique contribution made by the Leys Institute to Auckland. He recalled going to Leys Institute

to study after leaving Sacred Heart (now St Paul's) in the early 1930s. It was the only place left in Auckland, he said, to perpetuate the Victorian concept of education. Conceived in relation to the needs of a particular district, it had not been an idea mass-produced for everywhere. It existed for a special purpose, and that had given it character. Through its library and its gymnasium, it had sought to develop mind and body – the whole man. For John Reid, the institute embodied the Victorian idea of "education valued for what it did for you, not because it equipped you for a job". It catered for all in a non-sectarian way, and it incorporated the Victorian ideals of education and self-reliance which, "God knows," Reid observed, "we can do with these days!" [52]

13

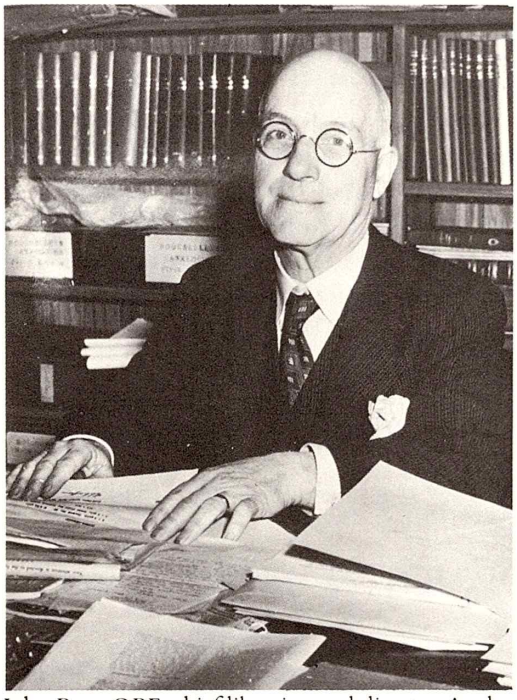
THE ARRIVAL OF JOHN BARR

THE CORRIDORS and committee rooms of the town hall were busy in August 1913, as 106 applicants were interviewed for the position of a clerk in the office of the city valuer, and 10 for the post of chief librarian. Shillington was by then 78 years of age. For that reason alone, it was clearly time to look for a librarian "with a good literary knowledge".

On this occasion, the council knew the kind of man (obviously no woman would put her name forward) it wanted for the £350 ($700) a year position. Marriage was not to be a pre-requisite for appointment, as it had been 25 years before. Applicants had, however, to be not more than 50 years of age, to have had at least three years' training and experience in a public library employing a systematic classification, and to be thoroughly versed in modern library methods.

Within a week of short-listing three of the applicants, the selection committee came to the unanimous decision "that one of them possesses the qualifications in such marked degree, that it is impossible to forward to the Council any other name for consideration with his application. Mr John Barr is the applicant referred to. His age is 29 years."[53]

John Barr had no academic qualifications, nor any professional ones, for that matter. From the age of 13 he had, though, been an assistant in the Mitchell Library in his native Glasgow before emigrating to Australia. He had become chief cataloguer at the Fisher Library of the University of Sydney. And in 1913 he was only 26 years of age, not 29, and single (he was to marry in 1914).



John Barr, OBE, chief librarian and director Auckland Art Gallery and Old Colonists' Museum (1913-1952).

Ellen Melville, 1882-1946, an Auckland City councillor 1913-1946 and library committee chairman 1917-1935 and 1938-1946. Portrait by Lois White

On 13 October 1913, John Barr took over as chief librarian and director of the art gallery. Both the council and the community at large were soon to become aware that there was a new broom in the library, poised to sweep clean. Even if the man behind it was scarcely taller than the broom itself.

Changes came quickly to the reference department. From a newly-installed desk just inside the entrance, an assistant would watch the comings and goings of visitors. An hourly count of books left on tables would show, Barr said, how much the book stock was being consulted – even if staff were sometimes heard to murmur over the next 39 years that it often showed only how many volumes had been taken from the shelves to prop up the one being read. The book-cases, themselves, came in for attention. John Barr was only a shade over 1.52 metres (five feet) tall, and to look up at the 3.66 metre-high shelves must have made him feel like Gulliver in Brobdingnag. He promptly had them cut down to a less forbidding 2.3 metres. Within a matter of months, too, he provided the council with a well-reasoned argument for making the library a truly free and public one. "If it is believed to be a good thing that the reference library should be free, it does not seem open to question why the lending department should not be free, also. The

experience of older countries seems in itself a sufficiently weighty answer ... It surely never was intended that a public library should be stygmatised as an institution for the promotion of fiction reading only. But that is merely what the lending section of the Auckland Public Library has become ... I would submit that the remedy lies in the hands of the City Council, which should abolish the subscription, convert the lending library into a free lending library and provide a thoroughly representative selection of the best books in all subjects of interest." [54] Noting that the membership of the library was at that time about 680, and that an average 6% of other communities normally became borrowers from free lending libraries, Barr reckoned that Auckland ought to have had at least 5,000 borrowers for a population which, by 1916, would rise to 65,000. Again, Dunedin provided the comparison: a population of fewer than 50,000 had 2942 adult and 1462 child borrowers making a total of 4404. And Dunedin had been a free lending library since 1908. In 1914, fiction accounted for 66% of stock of the Auckland Public Library as against the British average of 20%. To make possible the standards that he was advocating, Barr recommended raising the half-penny library rate to one penny. He was to have to wait another two years to see the library rate raised, but it would be 1946 before free library service was achieved in Auckland.

The literature of the early 20th century was to come in for criticism from the church in February 1914. In his Lenten pastoral, Dr Cleary, the leader of the Roman Catholics in Auckland, hit out at what he called the moral "slipaway", as represented in fiction and drama. It was, the bishop considered, symptomatic of a deep-seated social disease of the time, "of a lack of moral constraint" so common that it "furnished a market for purveyors of evil literature".[55] Dr Cleary found support in the mayor, C. J. Parr. Like the bishop, Parr regretted the "wholesale reading of some of the more lascivious of modern post-boilers". Nobody named titles. Nor was the library specifically mentioned. Had it been, Barr could certainly have been excused for the library situation was one he had inherited. And he could have reminded them of how he had surprised readers of the *New Zealand Herald* at the time of his appointment with the revelation that in Glasgow no novel was allowed a place on the shelves until it was at least two years old. After that time – and if it had survived the critics – it became a modern classic to be added to the library.[56]

The pre-First World War years may have been a time of "pot-boilers". It was also the period that produced H. G. Wells' *The History of Mr Polly*, E. M. Forster's *Howards End*, Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*, D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*. More than likely, John Barr would have assured the mayor that it was titles like these that he could expect to find increasingly on the shelves of the Auckland Public Library. It would certainly not be the last time that the type of fiction held in the library would come under fire.

When John Barr had come to Auckland for interview, he had made a point of viewing the collections given to the city by Grey and the Shaws. His comment had been

that he knew of no other municipal library that could lay claim to having anything to equal them. Not surprisingly, one of his first tasks after appointment was to have them better housed. What the mayor, C. J. (later Sir James) Parr discreetly termed "want of funds and, perhaps, a lack of enterprise" [57] had allowed the manuscripts and books for far too long to be lodged in odd places in the library. From December 1913 they went on display in handsome oak cases in an annexe off the reference department. It was a room in which natural light entered softly through stained glass windows, the centre one of which depicted the city's coat-of-arms. Within three years, though, it was obvious that any area lying in the lee of Albert Park was far too damp for treasures of that kind. By October 1918, the oak cases and their precious contents had been found a new home on the warmer Coburg (now Kitchener) Street side of the building, one floor above the lending library. With their removal, children were given a room of their own and a stock of some 1,400 books no less susceptible to dampness, but considerably less expensive to repair and replace.

Within a year of the shelving of the Grey and Shaw collections in the annexe with the stained glass windows, display cases for another enterprise were being manhandled to their positions one floor higher and overlooking Coburg Street.

As early as 1912 members of the Old Colonists' Association had formally offered the council help in collecting and preserving relics of life in the city and province in the early years of settlement. The departure of the school of art in 1915 to a property given by the council in Rutland Street left a large space available for the museum project. Here on 22 March 1916 the Old Colonists' Museum was opened, and John Barr added a third title to those he held of chief librarian and director of the art gallery. He became, as well, director of the Old Colonists' Museum.

The range of exhibits in the two museum rooms was as varied as it was fascinating. There was a slab of puriri from the last remaining block of the first house built at the missionary settlement at Waimate in Northland in the 1830s; wash drawings and photographs of early Auckland; a portrait of the missionary, Samuel Marsden; a walking-stick made from wood saved from the vessel *Boyd*, burned to the water-line by Maoris at Whangaroa, in 1809; a tool box made in the shape of a knife; portraits of members of parliament; photographs from the Thames and Coromandel goldfields in the middle years of the 19th century; and a block of wood from the H.M.S. *Orpheus*, wrecked on the bar of the Manukau Harbour in 1863 with the loss of 189 lives.

Rumour had it that there was also one object described on an accompanying card as a type of rabbit-trap. Investigation revealed, however, that it was a form of chastity girdle. It was promptly removed, as clearly having no place in an exhibition of the way we were in New Zealand in the early 19th century.

As often happens when enthusiasm outstrips discrimination, the museum was soon swamped with all manner of objects and articles, great and small, lent or donated by an interested public. As early as 1918 James Cowan, researching his history of *The New*

Zealand Wars,[58] was reported as finding in the museum much useful manuscript and pictorial material, "but in a very congested state". For all that, it was to remain for more than 39 years a place for Aucklanders of all ages to go, and to which to take visitors to the city. In popularity it rivalled the art gallery, two of whose exhibition rooms occupied space on the northern side of the same floor as the museum.

If older citizens found the climb up the steep flight of stairs to the second floor tiring, John Barr must also have found it taxing on occasion, if only because he had to travel further at shorter notice, and more frequently. Among the numerous large oils by Gottfried Lindauer, hung low on the walls of the upstairs galleries, was one of a Maori maiden bare to the waist. Such damage was being done to the canvas by fingers pushed against her nipples, that a button was said to have been installed behind the painting, and wired to sound an alarm in the office of the director one floor below. True or false, the matter was never the subject of an official report.

14

THE TRUNK DEVELOPS BRANCHES

WHEN GRAFTON BRIDGE was opened in April 1910, it was claimed to be the longest single-span, ferro-concrete structure in the world. Even more important than the sheer size of the bridge, was the fact that hundreds who lived on the other side of the deep gully suddenly felt themselves to be part of the greater Auckland. The Highway Board of Grafton had amalgamated with the City of Auckland as far back as 1882. It took the bridge, though, to move the council to decide to erect in the Grafton area the first of its branch libraries. Competitive designs were called in 1911 for a building in Mt Eden Road just beyond the Symonds Street shops. From 18 entries, that of a local architect, E. Bartley, was selected. The library was built at a cost of £3,037 ($6,074), and was opened on 19 March 1913 by the governor, Lord Liverpool, with a bookstock of some 2,000.

Understandably, councillors were proud of their first branch library. It had a lending department, a reading room, a committee room and a lecture hall to hold 200 and to be available for hire – though not for dancing, and never on Sunday. So proud, in fact, that they set up a special sub-committee to watch over its progress. Within a year the initial enthusiasm had waned somewhat; the sub-committee was disbanded, and two

Before Auckland opened its town hall in late-1911, the library and art gallery building on the corner of Wellesley Street East and Coburg (now Kitchener) Street was the centre of civic activities. Here, in March 1906, late-afternoon crowds listen to speeches of welcome to rugby footballers (the original "All Blacks") returning from their tour of Great Britain. Auckland Public Library

members of the general library committee were detailed to visit the branch as often as possible.

John Barr arrived in Auckland too late to play any part in planning either of the branch libraries established in 1913. He was present, however, when the old borough council offices in Parnell (then Manukau) Road, almost opposite the present library building, became the Parnell branch on 13 December 1913.

Inevitably, the transformation had all the hallmarks of a rushed affair. The Parnell Borough Council had amalgamated with the city as recently as February 1913. By September the decision had been taken to adapt the now-superfluous borough offices for library purposes. By Christmas enthusiastic local residents were choosing their holiday reading from a bookstock of some 1,000, which was housed in a tiny lending department next to a reading room seating only 24. Obviously more space would have to be found.

The outbreak of war in 1914 was to put plans back by ten years. In 1918, however, the wooden building was moved across the street to the corner of St Georges Bay and Parnell Roads, and an addition made to it. Like much of Parnell, the site had been owned by the Church of England. The city had bought the triangle of land in 1916 from the Diocesan Trust Board, as being the best site for the permanent library it had hoped to erect. Unfortunately, and most noticeably during the long, hot summer months, the library was to have as its neighbours the horses stabled in the adjacent works depot of the council.

To help defray costs, the council arranged the sale of land which the old borough council had earmarked for the library at the corner of Parnell Road and Ruskin (then called Russell) Street. It would be 1923 before a local architect, M. K. Draffin, had plans for a new library completed, and 30 July 1924 before the mayor, Sir James Gunson, declared open a new library designed broadly in the Italian Renaissance style. It cost £8,716 ($17,432) to build, and comprised a lending department, a reading room, children's room, committee room and a lecture hall of much the same size as Grafton's.

John Barr was not slow to realise the part that libraries could play in a time of war – even if that war were half a world away. "At a time when people's minds are athirst," he reported to his council, "for knowledge of the causes and effects of the great conflicts now raging, it is a bounden necessity on the part of the Council to provide for the great want."[59] He made it known that he would be pleased to allow the central library to be used as a clearing-house for books and magazines intended for the use of the armed forces. And, reaching out into the community in a fashion novel for the time, he arranged in the hall of Grafton library, a series of addresses, mostly by local clergymen and academics, on aspects of the war, illustrated in several cases with lantern slides. On the other side of town, the staff at Leys was involved in a similar exercise. And, like Barr, they remembered to leaven the lump from time to time with concerts and dramatic entertainment provided by the local Shakespearian and Rhetoric Clubs.

By 1916 Barr had managed to have his staff at Central Library raised to seven library assistants, plus a cataloguer, typist, a male cadet, a senior and a junior messenger and a night-watchman. And, in all likelihood using the Remington "writing machine" which had been put on trial in the library in late-1913, he had the typist alter the library letter-head in 1916. In the wave of public antipathy to things Germanic, Coburg Street had been re-named Kitchener Street, in commemoration of the English soldier and statesman drowned earlier that year when the H.M.S. *Hampshire* had been torpedoed off the Orkney Islands.

The war years were also to bring forth a rash of correspondence to the press. A letter to the *Herald* of 30 July 1917, was typical of many: "New Zealand should get rid of all books printed in the German langauge or English translations of them. Neither should their coarse guttural be heard in New Zealand. Their whole literature should be emptied out of our private and public libraries." Wisely, John Barr remained silent in the face

of such criticism. Nor did he draw attention to a particularly valuable item in German in the Grey Collection. This was a manuscript copy of *Was ist des deutschen Vaterland? (What is the German's Fatherland?)* by the celebrated poet and patriot, Ernst Moritz Arndt. Apparently Arndt had sent handwritten copies of his famous patriotic song to people he admired. Sir George Grey had received his in 1859, the year before Arndt died. Early in 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany heard about the manuscript in the Auckland Public Library and asked for a photographic copy of it. John Barr had readily given his permission, deeming the request a "compliment". "German people," he had commented at the time, "are enthusiastic collectors of all antiquities which relate to the Fatherland and the folk-lore of the country." [60]

Barr was to have his first chance to initiate library service in the way he wanted it, in 1915. When the Remuera Road Board amalgamated with Auckland City in March of that year, the city engineer, W. E. Bush, declared that the "capable administration which the City and its resources could afford, would enable Remuera to rank as one of the most desirable suburbs in the southern hemisphere." [61] Its north-facing, warm slopes had, indeed, always been desirable as a place in which to live. As early as 1840, John Logan Campbell had enthused over "Remuera's wooded shore sloping gently to Waitemata's sunlit waters".[62] The volcanic peak called Mt Hobson, because it was the first of Auckland's hills to be climbed by the Governor, was known to the Maoris as "Remuwera", meaning "the burnt hem of a garment". Apparently, in times long past, a Maori woman was killed and eaten there. Her clothes were thrown on the hot stones of the fire so that all that remained was the burnt hem – the "remu" – of her cloak. The name Remuera is, therefore, a corruption of the Maori "Remuwera".

Again, as in the case of Parnell just a year before, there was superfluous office space in Remuera Road, and the council resolved to convert the wooden, two-storeyed road board headquarters into a library. This, too, was a rushed job. The decision to convert was made in June 1915. The library, to serve a population which had already passed 5,000, was opened by the mayor, James (later Sir James) Gunson, on 2 October 1915. On the ground floor was a lending department and upstairs a reading room, housing some 1,218 volumes. Also located on the ground floor was a service new to the council branch libraries. This was a children's room, and it held exactly 150 books. The need for increased space and an expanded bookstock was even more imperative here than it had been in Parnell. In September 1918 an addition was made, but it gave little relief. Once more, as had happened in Parnell, delay in getting a new building was to pay dividends. In 1922, the city council sold to the Auckland Electric Power Board its short-lived undertaking to supply electricity. Part of the money it received allowed the purchase, for £4,729 ($9,458), of a splendid site at the corner of Remuera Road and Vincent (now St Vincent) Avenue. A loan of £12,000 ($24,000) was raised, of which £11,609 ($23,218) was spent on building the library. In Georgian-colonial style, it was claimed at the time as the finest of its size in New Zealand. Opened on 31 July 1926 by

Miss Ellen Melville, chairman of the council library committee, it won for its architects, W. H. Gummer and C. R. Ford, the medal for design awarded by the New Zealand Institute of Architects. Staff and public were to applaud it too, for the way in which the inside of the building had been "opened up" by the elimination of the more usual dividing walls and glass partitions. They would obviously have been even more delighted, had the architects' suggestion for ponds and fountains in front of the building been carried out. For reasons of economy a lawn and a sundial were substituted.

In the breathing space between the opening of the third branch library, at Remuera in 1915, and the fourth destined for Epsom in 1918, John Barr was able to turn his attention to making improvements at the Central Library. The most obvious of these was the reconstruction in 1917 of the vestibule and the wooden staircase in concrete, finished with white marble and green serpentine panels on the dado, slate and white marble squares on the floors, and white marble treads. The number of books issued from the central library decreased noticeably, if only temporarily, in the year 1916-17. The reasons were plain enough. More men were being mobilised for war service; and the nearby Auckland Grammar School, in Symonds Street, with its roll of more than 700, had moved out to its new building in Mt Eden.

For those who used the library for purposes beyond that of just a "good read", the year 1916 was of some importance. The original printed catalogue of 1888 had been kept up to date with supplements issued over a period of some years. Between 1904 and 1916, the printed catalogue, which had been revised by J. P. (later Professor) Grossmann, had been maintained in loose-leaf form; and in 1909, Percy Wood, who had had experience in English libraries, had been engaged to classify the stock of the reference department on the Dewey Decimal System. From 1916, and for the next 64 years, patrons were to use the card catalogue based on the dictionary plan.

Not everything that John Barr introduced met with approval. For instance, the "Ladies' Table" in the reference department. An article in the *Herald* on reading in war-time in the public library, had described the "few old ladies, who for years past had sat at the magazine table and dipped with absorbed interest into the pages of *The Queen*, or *The Ladies' Field*," but whose numbers were thinning noticeably.[63] "That table," chided a correspondent, "is an insult to the intelligence of the women of Auckland . . . as if a woman's brains never went beyond dress and gossip! That is the reason their number is diminishing." [64] An insult or not, the "Ladies' Table" would be there a quarter of a century later.

By 1917, and after nearly three years of war, optimism was starting to creep into the titles of the series of talks being given at Grafton library hall. As often as there were lectures like *The Architecture of the Devastated areas of France and Belgium* (by W. H. Gummer, the architect of the new Remuera branch), and *Impressions of Britain at War* (by the ex-mayor, C. J. Parr), there were others like *Can Germany Win?* and *Prospects for Peace* (by Professor Grossmann). The year 1918 found Professor Maxwell Walker

assessing the importance of the American President Woodrow Wilson and, early in 1919 Professor Grossmann was talking on *Peace and the League of Nations*. With the fighting over, the lectures became as diverse as *Spiritualism and Telepathy*, by T. W. Leys, *Samoa as I See It After the War*, by the Rev W. G. Monkton, *16,000 miles to the East and Back*, by E. Earle Vaile, *The Incidence of Goitre in New Zealand*, by Dr Carrick Robertson, and *The Economic Results of the War*. The latter was given by Miss Ellen Melville, the only woman to have been a speaker in the war-time series.

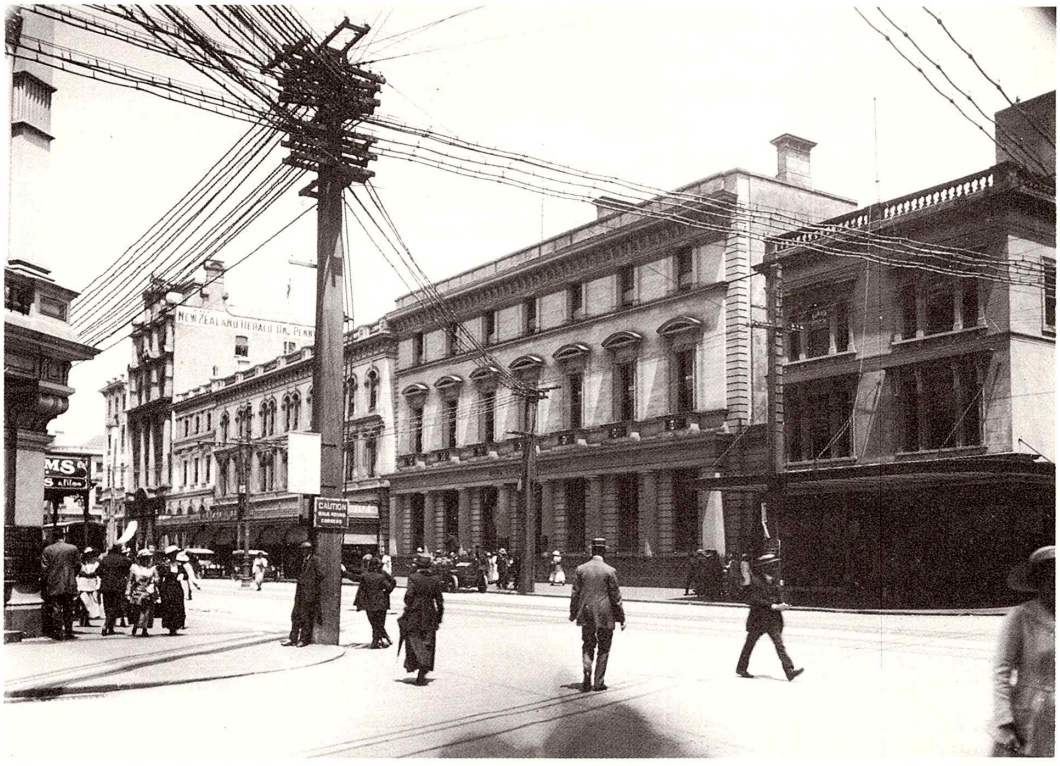
Eliza Ellen Melville was born in 1882 at Tokatoka, Northern Wairoa, of Scottish parents. She was educated at Auckland Girls' Grammar School, and at the then Auckland University College, where she studied law. In 1906 she became the second woman in New Zealand to qualify as a solicitor of the Supreme Court. By 1909 she was the first woman to practise law independently. Elected to the Auckland City Council in 1913 as its (and New Zealand's) first woman member, she was returned continuously to office for the next 33 years. In all that time, she did not miss a single council meeting, except on the occasions when she was out of Auckland on official business.

From 1880 until 1915, the mayor was ex-officio chairman of all council committees. From 1915, however, chairmen were appointed from the membership of the council at large. Save for two short breaks (1919-20 and 1935-38), Ellen Melville was the chairman of the library committee until her death in 1946.

Little more than lip service had been paid to the needs of the younger borrowers by the public libraries of Auckland until the opening of the Boys' Recreation and Reading Room at Leys Institute in 1909. Edward Shillington's report for 1893 had mentioned that a step had been taken to extend the privileges of the lending library to them by adding "a supply of suitable literature of a class most likely to attract them". We may only guess what that was. We do by 1908, however, have an inkling of what was thought suitable. Shillington spoke in that year of the "Cheapest library for boys and girls in the Dominion, and certainly the best selection of books especially for boys." [65] Among the 700 titles that had been added to the lending library were those like *How to Make Things*, *Boy Engineers*, *Boy Carpenters*, *Care of Animals*, *Adventure by Sea and Land* and *Heroes of War*. Small wonder that girls were seen seldom in that part of the library. As even Shillington was moved to comment: "Boys' books are much read by men, while girls' books are almost neglected." [66]

Between 1911 and 1912, and despite the novelty for Auckland of the new, silent motion-pictures, over 144,000 people visited the library in Wellesley Street East. Not everyone came to look at the newspapers or borrow fiction. They made good use of the reference department and of the new volumes that were being added to it. One parent was, in fact, moved to admit to the librarian that it was the quality of work done by the library that made it a self-help school, "My children are getting so d-m smart," he said, "that I am obliged to use the library to keep ahead of them!" [67]

For the younger ones, though, the pickings were slim. From a stock of only a thousand



Boaters and bustles, the *New Zealand Herald* at one penny, and the cautionary warning to "walk round corners". The place is the intersection of Queen Street and Shortland Street and the year 1919.

Auckland Public Library

or so "suitable" titles, there were 1,272 issues in the year 1909. With counter-attractions like scouting and sports beginning to attract boy readers, issues dropped dramatically over the next two or three years. By 1912 only 308 issues were made to children. By 1914 juvenile loans were to amount to only 10% of the total issues. Adult fiction accounted for 74%.

In 1915 Barr had been able to provide special facilities for children at the Remuera branch. He judged it time, in 1916-17, to offer service on a much broader basis. If children could not or would not come to the books, he would take the books to them. In this he was greatly encouraged and helped by James Gunson, the mayor. Many years later, Barr would name Gunson as the one of the six mayors under whom he had served, who did the most for libraries. On an overseas visit Gunson had seen the so-called "Buffalo" system of library service operating in that American city. Reporting his findings to the Council on his return, he found an enthusiastic ally in Barr for starting such a service in Auckland.

In brief, public primary schools within the Auckland City Council rating area were

to make available space for class-room libraries that would hold books to be provided at the expense of the Auckland Public Library. The selection of stock was to be the responsibility of the children's librarian, and teachers were to act as class librarians.

The first school to be given a collection of books (suitable, generally, for those between the ages of about eight and twelve) was Parnell in April 1917. Next came an inner-city school, Napier Street. Within seven years 19 schools were included in the scheme, with 5,700 books in class-room libraries all over the city. The scheme continued to expand through the 1920s and well into the 1930s. In 1938, there was a noticeable slackening of interest in the service. Of the many reasons put forward for the decline, several seemed valid. Children were tending to use their neighbourhood libraries more; the rolls of inner-city schools were dropping as families moved to the more distant suburbs of Avondale and the eastern bays such as St Heliers, Kohimarama and Mission Bay; a lower birth rate was having its effect on school numbers; and there was the pull of the cinema, and the lure of the kind of pulp magazine which, for many, seemed the right level of light reading for the long hot summer of 1937-38. The service continued, nevertheless, and by 1950 had been extended to all 34 primary and intermediate schools within the boundaries of the Auckland City Council, as well as to several church schools. Issues through schools alone in 1949-50 were 76,405, with a further 260,127 being made from the children's departments of central and the eight branch libraries.

From 1950, help in the form of permanent loan collections of books from the then National Library Service, allowed the scheme to be extended to standards 1 and 2 (previously only standard 3 to form 1 had been included). In 1954, however, the National Library Service assumed total responsibility for the library service to the schools of Auckland, a service which had been conducted by the public library for 37 years.

In a radio talk in 1950,[68] A. R. D. Fairburn, poet, satirist and critic, was to recall what the public library had meant for him growing up in Parnell. When that branch library opened in 1913, he was nine years of age. He remembered that the librarian at that time was a Miss Ada McDonald. "If Miss McDonald had been any sort of a gorgon," he said, "I've no doubt it would all have been spoiled for me. But she wasn't a gorgon, or anything approaching it. I recall her vaguely as a most genial spirit, who gave the library the kind of warmth and the human and friendly feeling that all libraries ought to have if they're not to become just book-museums. And I think that it was about this time that I discovered *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*: And *Huckleberry Finn* is a book that no amount of growing up and no passage of time and experience is ever going to whittle away."

Rex Fairburn remembered how, in those days, little or nothing was done in the way of providing special facilities for young people. "I did pretty well, but all the same I sometimes wonder at the vast improvements that have been made since." And he went on to sketch for his listeners, what the introduction of branch library service had meant for one family – or at least for one youngster in that family – for whom the central

library was a still-largely-unexplored place. "I can't pretend that my tastes were particularly refined," he said, "but I certainly had a good appetite. Those were the days when Stephen Leacock was publishing a book about every six months – or even oftener it seems in retrospect. I suppose you've noticed the way sea-gulls behave when you throw a fish-head or a bit of discarded bait into the water. Well, that was very much the sort of thing that happened whenever a new Leacock was brought into the house. It was read by gaslight, candlelight, moonlight and daylight . . ." It was about that time, as Fairburn recalled, that John Buchan published *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. "I still think it's the best mystery story ever written – with a special quality of some sort that puts it into a class by itself." He recalled borrowing from the Parnell library other books which had meant so much to him: the Sherlock Holmes series, and "all that long and blissful succession of romances that Rider Haggard wrote – *She*, and *Ayesha*, and *King Solomon's Mines*, and the rest of them. I'm just trying to explain, in a round-about way, *what* the public library *meant* to me at that time. And if it meant so much to me, then I suppose it must have meant a good deal to a lot of other people, too."

Epsom was recognised as a district of Auckland as early as 1841. It was also one of the first areas of Auckland to be farmed. Once he disembarked from the *Jane Gifford* in October 1842, Robert Graham was not slow to take a look at the land beyond Commercial Bay. "A road from the top of Shortland Crescent," he noted in his diary, "runs to the Manukau, a distance of 10 miles where a coach can run the whole way. Mr Gould and I went out on the road for 4 miles to a place called Epsom. There is a little cultivation going on here, but none nearer to town. Saw some nice cottages and fine gardens and two farms of about 10 acres each under cultivation in wheat and barley . . ." [69]

By 1882 Epsom also had a privately-owned library, in a detached building behind a hall in the area of present-day Alba Road. It was here that the weekly meetings of the Epsom and One Tree Hill Road Boards were held. Epsom amalgamated with the Auckland City in January 1917, and again the search was on to provide public library facilities for the district. It was decided to alter the building formerly occupied by the Epsom Road Board and the Manukau Water Supply Board in Manukau Road.

Mayor Gunson officially opened the building and its hall on 27 August 1918. So popular was it to become that it had to be extended by 1924, and again in 1930, when part of the hall was absorbed into the library.

John Barr was to remember 1918 for other reasons. His name was listed among reservists under military call-up (though the war ended before he had to go to camp). Harry Farnall, his senior assistant, resigned to take control of the library in Invercargill. And, more pleasingly, John Barr got rent-free accommodation for himself and his family in a house next to the Epsom library, "in view of the extension of the system of branch libraries in the suburbs, and the desirability of the chief librarian being in the position to exercise a personal supervision of the libraries in the evening." [70]

As war ended in November 1918 New Zealand was swept by the world-wide influenza epidemic. In Auckland alone, 1680 died. Libraries were closed for nearly a month from 8 November. In the city, the staff at central library accepted donations of books and magazines for patients in temporary hospitals and convalescent homes. In the suburbs, the Epsom, Parnell and Remuera branches became depots from which medicine was distributed daily. Women's committees took over the buildings, and boy scouts were asked to report to each of the libraries, prepared to do whatever they could by way of assistance to the sick and needy. Early December saw the libraries being cleansed and books being disinfected before being put back on the shelves.

Late in 1920, John Barr was granted three months' sick leave. Farnall not having been replaced after his resignation, Barr recommended that Abram Dalgliesh Cunningham be appointed temporarily to the position of chief librarian and director of the art gallery. Cunningham, who had been a colleague of Barr's at Glasgow's Mitchell Library, had risen to the rank of one of the chief assistants there. On his return to work in early 1921, John Barr was able to convince Ellen Melville and the library committee of the need for a deputy. After all, he was now responsible for the operation of a busy central library, four fast-growing branches and a schools' service. And he knew that he would shortly be preparing for the council a brief history of Auckland, as well as a municipal handbook.

In March 1921 applications were called within New Zealand for the position of deputy chief librarian from qualified males of not more than 45 years of age. "In particular," read the conditions of appointment, "he will be responsible for the cataloguing and classification work of the reference department."

Three names came forward. One applicant was not considered since he was a bookseller, not a librarian. Two were interviewed. Each, like Barr, had worked in the Glasgow public library system. The unsuccessful one was Joseph Norrie. He would become librarian at Leys Institute in 1924 and chief librarian of Wellington in 1928. The one recommended for the post was Abram Cunningham. His experience in reference work was held to be superior to Norrie's, his standard of education higher, and he had a good working knowledge of Greek, Latin and French. And, as one of his supporting testimonials stressed, he had had extensive experience of "exact classification". He had the edge, too, in that he had acquitted himself well in the time he had stood in as acting chief librarian while Barr was overseas on sick leave. Cunningham took up his position on 18 April 1921 at £360 ($720) a year. And thus began, for John Barr, the second of two long and close working relationships in the development of public library service in Auckland. Ellen Melville was to be his committee chairman from 1917 for a total of 29 years, except for two short breaks. "Abe" Cunningham would be his deputy for 30 years.

Grey Lynn did not get its branch library until 1924, despite the fact that the borough council had agreed to merge with Auckland City ten years before in July 1914. The area

had been developed in the early days of Auckland by two business partners, James Williamson and Thomas Crummer. Their names live on in two of the principal roads of the suburb. They had called their property Surrey Hills, after their home county in England. In 1885 the estate was formed into a borough named Newton. In 1899 it became Grey Lynn, in honour of Sir George Grey. The conditions of amalgamation in 1914 had, however, precluded rating the area for library purposes until 1921. For prospective library patrons, the delay must have been infuriating. For John Barr, the long wait was probably worth it. It would be the first time since Grafton opened in 1913, that he would be able to offer service from a building designed from the outset as a library.

The Georgian-style library, in Surrey Crescent, was designed by W. H. Gummer (the architect also for Remuera branch), cost £8,534 ($17,068) to erect, and included a lending department, a reading room, a children's department, a lecture hall and committee room. It was the third branch library that Mayor Gunson had opened, and a Saturday afternoon (13 December 1924) was selected so that "the workers of the district would be enabled to attend, and this was appreciated and shown by the fact of the large number present." [71]

The mayor had been pleased to tell the people of Grey Lynn that sunny Saturday afternoon, that the council by then had a chain of libraries. And that to complete its policy, there remained only one branch to be erected – a new one at Remuera. As matters stood at the end of 1924, he was right. Three more amalgamations in three years, though, were to extend the chain by another three links.

Pt Chevalier takes its name from Lieutenant George Robert Chevalier. A musketry instructor in the 65th Regiment, he was camped for a time in the area in 1860-61 on his way to war with the Maoris in Taranaki. Apparently he won the regimental rifle shoot at a place which his fellow soldiers called in his honour "Chevalier Point".

The Pt Chevalier Road District had become part of Auckland City on 1 March 1921. Curiously enough, but prompted finally, perhaps, by seeing the building their next-door neighbours in Grey Lynn had achieved in late 1924, the people at "the Point" waited till May 1926 before pushing for library service in their area. In that month Councillor M. J. Coyle presented to the council a petition on behalf of 481 ratepayers.

Once more it was to be a matter of an already-used building. This time, though, it would at least have seen some service as a library. It lay about five miles away at Remuera, where the attractive new library in brick was almost finished. By August 1926, the two-storeyed wooden building in Remuera Road had been dismantled and taken across town to the corner of Great North Road and Pt Chevalier Road. There, having cost £654 ($1,308) to move and re-erect, it was opened by Councillor Ellen Melville on 20 November 1926. It had a reading room, children's corner and a lending department containing some 1,000 books. It was, of course, too small from the start. It was to be a further ten years before the decision was taken to transfer the library to the

adjacent but still not large public hall. That move, completed by 25 March 1938, gave the children of the district a department of their own, and allowed space for about 7,000 volumes.

With halls available at four of the six branch libraries, John Barr was able to continue the series of addresses begun so successfully at Grafton in the early war years. Pt Chevalier lacked a hall, and the one at Remuera had hardly become available when the decision was taken to discontinue the talks.

Meanwhile, audiences at Grafton, Parnell, Epsom and Grey Lynn (as well, of course, as those at the Leys Institute at the Three Lamps) were to hear topics discussed as diverse as *The Romance of Polar Exploration*, and *Animal Camouflage*, *Maori History* and *Reptiles*, *Palestine*, and *Everyman's Dwelling*, *Tongariro National Park*, and *Sound Warfare*. For these, speakers were engaged as eminent as Sir Peter Buck, R. M. Algie, Archbishop Walter Averill, C. Reginald Ford, Jasper Calder, R. A. Falla and Ellen Melville. She was, once again, the only woman to take part in the lecture series.

Regretfully, however, John Barr was to report a falling-off in attendances in 1927, to the point where he doubted the lectures worth continuing. With one or two exceptions (Sir Peter Buck always attracted a full house), the talks were no longer popular. Even the concerts and dramatic entertainments which Barr had interspersed (he had contributed to one himself, when he read from the works of Robert Louis Stevenson) were losing money. The programmes were quietly dropped from 1928 as Aucklanders were attracted increasingly to the cinema and, in particular, to the novelty of the talking picture, which reached New Zealand in 1929.

15

BOOKS UNDER FIRE

ALREADY, in the columns of the press, the cinema was being held responsible for the decline in "taste" in literature. Young women constituted "75% of those who asked for novels which were dangerous or immature" according to an unnamed Auckland bookseller, in 1924.[72] "Part of the trouble," he believed, "was due to the vogue of the cinematograph. There was an adult generation which had grown up under the influence of the picture theatre, and a result of the frequency of poor picture plays and less reading, there was an astonishing lack of taste and discernment."[73]

Other correspondents vented their anger on the public library. "Ad Astra," writing to the *Herald*, had been surprised by some "really horrible books" on the shelves of the lending library. "Many people, girls in most instances, are frequently given a subscription with a view to giving them a fair amount of up-to-date reading matter. In numerous instances I have been obliged to return the books unread after a glance through their noxious contents. I supervise my children's reading, but, in the interests of those whose parents have not the time, nor perhaps the inclination to do so, some sort of censorship should be exercised." [74]

The library found a ready and reasonable defender in J. W. Kealy, the president of the Booksellers' Association, and a respected Auckland retailer. He noted that he had even heard complaints that the works of "some authors of highly seasoned sex fiction" were not on the shelves of the public library. "For good or ill," he replied to the writer, "the present is an age of realism in the matter of literature, and it would be an impossible task to eliminate all books dealing with subjects not usually discussed in the presence of a young person. The best that censorship can do is to ban the insidious type (a by no means easy task, and one calling for shrewd discrimination on the part of the librarian), the rest is a matter for the parents or guardian." [75]

John Barr had his most public brush with censorship in 1929. In June of that year he refused to buy for the library the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by the German writer, Erich Maria Remarque. The council and the columns of the press of New Zealand were noisy with the sound of verbal battle for the next two months. The book had been banned, said Barr, "because of its crudeness, and on account of the objectionable handling of certain passages. The German outlook may be somewhat different, but it is considered that it is not a suitable publication for our shelves." [76] He went on to explain how books were selected for the library on their literary merit, how much time it took for the staff to "ferret" out reviews from recognised literary journals. Between 1,000 and 1,500 books were bought for the lending library each year, and "trash" was rejected simply because it failed to measure up to literary standards. Lion Feuchtwanger's *Jew Suss*, for instance, had been accepted. And, though he thought it not altogether free from a certain grossness, "it had also undoubted literary quality and a fine historical vein. On the other hand, he had turned down the novel *Simon Called Peter* by Robert Keable and also the *Tarzan* series by Edgar Rice Burroughs. "Even when a liberal view is taken," he reported to the council, "it is impossible to include everything that is published."

John Barr had his allies. Joe Norrie, by now the chief librarian in Wellington, read Remarque's book and agreed that it was not fit for general consumption. "The language is coarse and lurid," he told the short-lived Auckland newspaper the *Sun*, "just as used by soldiers, but I think our duty to the public must prevent this book being placed on our shelves for general reading. The plea has been put forward that the book would tend to stop wars, but as far as I know it has not been taken up by the Wellington branch of the League of Nations Union." [77] Support came as well from others who had not read

the book. Not least in open meeting of the Auckland City Council, where only three of the councillors (all Labour Party members) wanted it in the library. Tom Bloodworth considered it ought to be read by boys and girls who would be the victims of the next war if their influence did not prevent it. F. N. Bartram challenged the right of the librarian to act as a moral censor. And, while agreeing that some of the passages objected to might have been omitted without injury to the book, he considered that it had to be judged as a whole.

There was never doubt where and behind whom Ellen Melville stood. "The book is not fit for unrestricted circulation," she told the council, "and we must show our faith in the librarian's judgement." [78] She even went so far as to threaten resignation were the council to take what she called the responsibility of placing the book in the hands of young people. And it was absurd, she thought, to suggest that John Barr had banned the book. Thousands of books were turned down, she explained, and that book was one of them. If people wanted it, they could buy it for a few shillings.

Want it they did, and get it they did. Tongue obviously in cheek, the *Sun* reported "wharf labourers, teamsters, drovers, and other fastidious readers joining maiden ladies in swelling the popular demand." [79] The library staff reported that no other book had been in such demand, and booksellers rejoiced in the rush to their shops.

Interestingly enough, leader writers and readers of the three Auckland daily newspapers were generally censorious of the council and its librarian. The *Herald* thought the fact that the book had not found a place in the public library of no actual consequence. "People will seek out this memorial of the war, and will not be demoralized by a few descriptions of bodily functions or the appeasing of natural desires." [80] An editorial in the *Sun* observed how appropriate to the circumstances was the comment of Katherine Mansfield, in her diary, about "the narrowness and provincialism of a remote colonial city".[81] Reverberations reached even to Sydney. "Maorilanders will have to pay for *All Quiet on the Western Front*", the *Bulletin* told its readers, "if they wish to make acquaintance with this epical war story . . . some sore subscribers are now beginning to ask what business the librarians have to ban a book which has passed the general censorship committee appointed by the Customs department, and towards which the police are favourable." And, twisting the knife a little, the editorial concluded: "The amusing side of the thing is that the London *Times*, which Auckland librarian Barr invoked when justifying himself, had given the book a glowing review and called it a work of genius." [82]

For many librarians, Ernest Bell, who headed the Canterbury Public Library, probably summed up the situation best. "The public library," he told the *Press*, "should first of all hold to the principle that censorship is not really its province. Novels are written by reputable authors, published by respectable publishers, and sold by reputable booksellers, and, therefore, it is futile for a library to undertake to censor the books and refuse to provide them for the use of mature readers." [83]

Mid-day summer scene in the late 1920s of Customs Street East, at the intersection with Queen Street. The Waverley Hotel (left) was demolished to make way for the South Pacific Hotel and the Dilworth Building replaced the Tyrone Buildings on the extreme right. Auckland Public Library

One correspondent to the *Herald*, reminded the council that the library belonged to the public and should contain representative books on all subjects, "and not pretty-pretty stories fit for Sunday School prizes." "After all," said the writer, "no one need read the book unless they like. There is a certain type of mind belonging to people with good intentions, but little wisdom, who would fence us from the cradle to the grave with barbed-wire entanglements labelled, 'Thou shalt not.' Unfortunately, these people seem to have control of the city library. I do hope the matter will be reconsidered." [84]

It probably was reconsidered, for Barr's part in the contretemps was untypical. All the same, there is no record as to when Remarque's masterpiece found its place on the shelves of the Auckland Public Library. In the meantime, the council, committee chairman, and chief librarian may well have considered the censorship battle to have been fought and won.

16

DONORS AND READERS

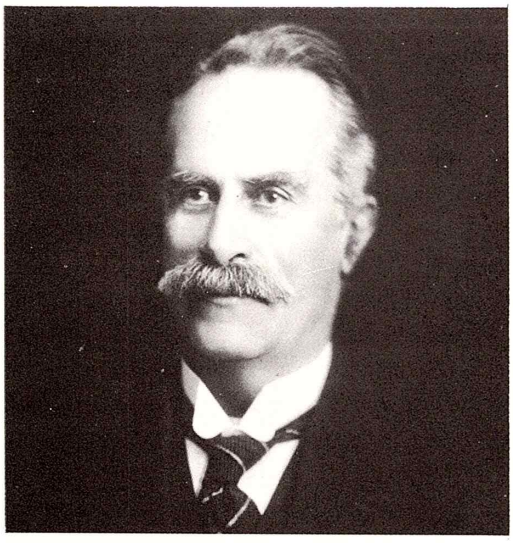
IN THE SECOND half of the 1920s, the Auckland Public Library again found itself the recipient of a valuable collection of books, and with the promise of yet another. The latter, which would be known as the Reed Dumas Collection, comprised manuscripts and books by and about the French 19th century novelist and playwright, Alexandre Dumas. It belonged to Frank Wild Reed of Whangarei. By agreement with the Auckland City Council late in 1926, Reed made the corporation joint owner with him of a collection which, even then, numbered over 700 items. On his death, the collection was to be housed in the Auckland Public Library. At the time the agreement was signed, however, its transfer from Whangarei to Auckland lay 28 years in the future.

The other collection was to become available almost immediately. In 1926, an Auckland city councillor, L. Alfred Eady, attended a library conference in Dunedin. There he heard Auckland's chief librarian, John Barr, speak about the need in public libraries for music scores and the literature of music. Barr had questioned whether any library in New Zealand had a collection of even the standard operas.

Back in Auckland, the two men conferred with the result that Barr asked the deputy librarian, Cunningham, to draw up a list of what would be needed for a music collection. Eady then made it known publicly that, on behalf of his father, Lewis Eady, who was well known in the city as the proprietor of a Queen Street store selling musical instruments, he was presenting to the Auckland Public Library over 600 volumes of music scores and literature. The collection – which Alfred Eady undertook to add to in the years ahead – formed the basis of the Lewis Eady music section of the library.

The immediate problem was to find somewhere to shelve it. It was decided, finally, to make use of the entrance vestibule, which had a lofty ceiling reaching as high as the second floor. A room was constructed at the level of the first floor, two windows were pierced and an entrance to the room made from the landing outside the reference department. In this room, 5 metres square, and containing some 1,181 items, service began on 13 June 1928 from what was to be the first separate music section in a public library in either Australia or New Zealand.

Subsequent gifts, not only from the Eady family, but also by numerous other benefactors and organizations, made the music collection the most extensive in any public library in New Zealand. Fred Shaw contributed generously to it with the gift of over



Lewis Roberts Eady, 1858-1937, donor of the Lewis Eady Music Collection. Dobson Studio

At the corner of Queen Street and Wellesley Street a bus takes on passengers for Mt Albert and Blockhouse Bay, a city-bound tram makes its stop at the safety zone below the library and pedestrians pick their way across vacant land soon to be covered by the Civic Theatre. The year is 1927.

Auckland Public Library

a hundred volumes of music and literature relating to music. As also did William Townsend. The interest, in 1947, from the balance of Townsend's estate bequeathed to the library, allowed some of the more expensive type of musical literature to be bought. The presentation of the Fenton memorial collection of 50 scores of chamber music by the Auckland Chamber Music Society, in 1948, commemorated two of its foundation members. Between 1949 and 1960, nearly 850 sets of pieces for vocal and instrumental composition were donated by the committee of the Auckland Secondary Schools Music Festival. From the Auckland branch of the Society of Music Teachers of New Zealand came 640 volumes in 1949. A further 625 volumes, received in 1953, commemorated Harold Baxter, who had for many years been the conductor of the local radio orchestra. And, in 1966, the Royal Auckland Choir gave some 200 volumes more. These and the numerous other donations to the library's music collection were to raise its holdings by the year 1967 to over 12,000 music scores, 4,500 volumes of the literature of music and 3,300 long-playing records.

At the start of the new decade in 1930, John Barr could look back on ten years of solid progress. New branches had been erected, and existing buildings converted to library purposes. Valuable collections had been started or secured. The Carnegie Institute of Washington had, in 1921, designated the Auckland Public Library as a depository for all its publications; Victoria University of Wellington was the only other New Zealand library so honoured. In 1923, Moss Davis, an Auckland merchant and father of a future mayor of the city, had donated a number of rare holograph letters from, among others, Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, Napoleon, Robert Burns, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Charles Dickens.

A valuable collection of about 1,700 negatives of views of Auckland and its suburbs, had been bought from Henry Winklemann for £100 ($200) in 1928. Fourteen years later, in 1942, another 5,000 photographic negatives of Auckland buildings and street scenes were presented to the library. They had been taken in the first 30 or so years of this century by an Epsom chemist, J. D. Richardson. These, and the Winklemann items, make up a splendid source of reference in the New Zealand department of the library for researchers, authors, publishers and others.

As the 1920s opened, the library took out a membership to the National Library for the Blind in London. This made possible the purchase each year of some 80 novels and non-fiction titles through the Jubilee Institute for the Blind (now the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind) in Parnell. The books, in braille, were for issue to blind readers, including servicemen blinded in World War I. As the decade closed, two further amalgamations of independent local authorities with the Auckland City Council would pose problems of extending library service to citizens in areas lying, respectively, to the distant east and to the south west of Queen Street.

For John Barr there had, of course, been disappointments. The Auckland Chamber of Commerce had not given any encouragement to his suggestion that the central library

would be the best place for a section of books of use to those in business in Auckland. He would make space available, he said, if the chamber would agree to transfer its library to his control. The reply, in 1920, was that the chamber was the "proper" place for such a library.

Undeterred, Barr in the same year set up in the reference department a section given over to books of a quick-reference nature and containing, among others, dictionaries, encyclopedias, official government publications, telegraphic codes and trade directories.

Little luck attended another move by Councillor L. Alfred Eady. At his request in 1927 the council resolved to call applications for a municipal reference librarian and publicity officer. The appointee would be expected to familiarise himself with all questions of council policy, and be able to convey them to the public; to prepare for publication the *Auckland Municipal Record*; to compile attractive advertisements for the zoo, for band concerts and for the tramways system. And, almost as an afterthought, to organise a municipal reference library for the council and its staff. The matter went as far as the calling of applications and the listing of names. At that stage the finance committee, wanting to keep costs down, decided the time was "not opportune".[85] Alfred Eady took what he called "personal exception" to the committee's recommendation, saying that he would have to consider his attitude towards the council very seriously.[86] He did, in fact, not continue to serve after that year. For John Barr, it was a case of yet another important development being set aside. He had earlier prepared reports in favour of the proposal in both 1916 and 1919, warning, however, on the latter occasion that it would be a "costly" exercise. The matter went into limbo until 1936.

Cold comfort for Councillor Eady, and cold comfort also for customers of the central library, who were heard increasingly to complain about the lack of warmth in the building. And that, despite the oil-fired, hot-water heating plant which had been installed in the reference department in 1927. One correspondent to the *Sun* newspaper, "Igloo", declared that readers ran the risk of having to be prised off their chairs, so cold was the reading room.[87] "Ice Age", writing to the same paper, suggested that members of the library committee visit the building every night for a week from 6 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. "They must take no foot warmers, overcoats or thermos flasks, and must stay the full time unless the glass goes down to eight below freezing point, at which stage they may be released."[88] An obviously male chauvinist had no doubt where the fault lay. "Windows and doors are left open," he wrote to the *Sun*, "day and night, summer and winter, hot or cold till 9 p.m. . . . the rain drives right into the front door, on to the stone flags and lies, say, $^1/_8$" deep. Visitors have to walk through this slush and carry it right through the building on their boots. This makes the floor like a pig-sty. Again, I saw only one man in the place – all women. If this is the way women run a show then they have much to learn. Also there is a woman chairman of the Library Committee. Such a show run by men would not be tolerated for a moment."[89]

Not everyone wanted the heat turned up, though. "Student No 3", for example,

trusted that "the authorities in charge will continue keeping it (the reading room) well ventilated, as I for one do not believe God's pure, fresh air is a poisonous gas to be kept out at all costs." [90] He chided "Student No 2", whose letter to the *Star* must have prompted his reply, "to study the importance of fresh air in keeping one well." [91] So far as the ground floor reading room was concerned, he probably had all the cool air he wanted. It had no form of heating, nor was to have for a long time.

It was the irrepressible Rex Fairburn who, in the *Star* summed up for many the atmospheric conditions prevailing in the first floor reference department as winter-time visitors dried out their garments and themselves by staying as close as they could to the newly-installed radiators. "I am a frequent visitor to the Auckland Public Library, and have many times in the past been struck with the uncleanliness of some of those with whom I find myself rubbing shoulders. Not until a day or two ago, when I spent several hours in the library in rather soupy weather, did I realise just how potent the scent of a few local bibliophiles can be when exposed to a warm, damp atmosphere. Several were so pungent that they could be smelt with the naked nose at a distance of 40 or 50 feet. Could not the City Council install some sort of fumigating plant to remove the more poisonous aromas?" [92]

Hot or cold, the central and the branch libraries continued to attract visitors, and to record ever-increasing numbers of books issued in the decade between 1920 and 1930. In the year ended March 1920, 285,293 volumes had been borrowed. Ten years later, the figure had climbed to 592,342. One category of membership gave Barr cause for worry at the end of the 1920s. Children were not reading as much as they used to. The leader writer for the *Sun* thought that the economic position of the Dominion could be as much responsible for the decline as the novelty of the "talkies" and the "wireless". "At one time," he observed, "it was possible to thrust into the young scholar's hand a copy of Thackeray, Dickens or Scott and rest assured that it would be read with a greater or smaller display of juvenile enjoyment. Experience has proved to the Auckland library authorities this method of moulding the literary tastes of youth is wholly ineffective. Besides, advanced ideas, and the greater sophistication of youth in scientific and topical affairs have changed all that. Just as the young movie patron of today must have his mystery play in place of the old-time, buck-jumping, wild-west drama, so does the young reader insist upon fiction about things which he knows – aeroplanes, submarines, motor-cars and speed-boats. *Ivanhoe* and *Treasure Island* are always popular with juvenile readers – and they always will be – but it is a significant thing that well over half of the books taken from the children's department of central library last month were works of fiction." [93] To try to win back the youngsters, the library committee resolved in October 1929 to reduce the subscription for children of city ratepayers and residents, from five shillings to two shillings and sixpence (50 cents to 25 cents), the former charge to hold good for other children. At best it could only be a holding measure. The root cause of the slump in interest among young readers remained the subscription itself,

halved though it now would be. The remedy – free library service for children – was still five years in the future.

17

EXPANSION EAST AND WEST

JOHN BARR entered the 1930s with high hopes. There was to be the immediate challenge of providing library facilities for another 9,000 citizens of Auckland, new ratepayers, residents and their families. And there was the decided possibility of seeing the subscription system scrapped in favour of a genuinely free (i.e. rate-supported) public library service. He was to achieve the first of the two objectives quite speedily. A world-wide depression, followed by a world-wide war, were to put paid for a further 16 years to the most cherished of his ambitions.

St Heliers Bay, some six miles east of the city, was one of the earliest areas of Auckland to be settled. Some say it was known to the Maoris as simply "Whanganui", meaning "big bay". It is believed it was given its present name by a Major James Walmsley, an early land-owner. It seems that the bay reminded him of his birthplace on the Channel Island of Jersey, whose capital is St Helier.

Public libraries of a kind were set up in the district quite early on. There is in existence in the central library a small printed catalogue of what is called the "Tamaki Library", dated 1859. Most of the 326 books listed in it are non-fiction, with a predominance of works on religious subjects. Not surprisingly, perhaps, since the library was apparently under Church of England control. It was located in the communal centre of the district close to the old Church of St Thomas, the public school, the post office, the local body offices, and the pound where animals which had strayed were held until claimed.

As Elizabeth Jackson has recorded,[94] other libraries operated in the district from time to time, following the foundation of the Tamaki West Road Board in 1862. In 1923 a local resident gave 150 novels to the road board to start a library in its offices. Another citizen contributed 260, and the board itself bought a further 1,000 from an "up-to-date" circulating library at a "very reasonable figure".

It was planned to include space for the bookstock of the library in the new road board offices being built near the sea-front at the corner of St Heliers Bay Road and Polygon Road. When that proposed brick building was reduced in size to cut costs, there was

clearly no space in it for a library. In June 1926 the board agreed to send the books to the volunteer fire brigade up in Long Drive, on condition that they were to be lent to fire brigade staff only and not to be taken off the premises. So ended the second attempt to run a public library in the district.

In a poll held on 22 June 1927, the residents of Tamaki West Road Board district (which included the suburbs of St Heliers Bay, Glendowie, Kohimarama and Mission Bay) voted heavily in favour of amalgamation with the city. Problems over the terms by which the area of Orakei would be included in the merger delayed the date of the act of incorporation until 1 April 1928.

Across on the other side of the city lay Avondale, a sprawling rural area, known until 1882 as The Whau. It is uncertain how the district came by its name. One writer believed it to be the Maori for "desolation" or "wilderness".[95] Other sources refer to an attractive native tree of the same name which once flourished in the northern part of the island and was sometimes known as the New Zealand mulberry.[96] The change from The Whau to Avondale was made in commemoration, apparently, of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale, who was the eldest son of King Edward VII. As early as 1921, Avondale ratepayers had petitioned the city council for union. Surprisingly, the council did little to encourage amalgamation, preferring to wait for the building boom that was obviously imminent in the district.

In 1922 Avondale elevated itself from a road board to a borough council, and in May 1927 made an unofficial approach to Auckland city for amalgamation. Union took place on 1 September 1927, and the area of Auckland city swelled immediately by 40 per cent.

The question was how best and quickest to provide library service for people who obviously wanted it. Both areas were still only sparsely populated, although the opening of Tamaki Drive (the "waterfront road") from the city to St Heliers Bay would by 1931 bring the eastern suburbs within 20 minutes of Queen Street.

Forty residents of the St Heliers Bay area petitioned for a branch library in July 1928. The city council declined action on the grounds of the still-scattered population and of the nearness of the branch at Remuera. The same answer was given to the 207 people in Avondale who made it known in a similar fashion that they wanted a library. Pt Chevalier was said to be close enough for them; even the central library in town, "which would, in any case be used by many of the residents of the district".

Anticipating problems of accommodation, John Barr had written off to library authorities in the United States in 1928 about the use of a "motor book wagon". As a result, he recommended a library "on wheels" as the most satisfactory way, in the circumstances, to give service in the Tamaki and Avondale areas. Wary of having to find the sum of £400 ($800) for a vehicle with an expected life of only five or six years, councillors decided to do nothing for at least 12 months. Their hands were to be forced in the matter of both suburbs before the year was out.

Pressed by the local ratepayers' group, the council resolved to do again in St Heliers

Bay what it had done on three occasions before – make over now-defunct road board offices into a library to hold, in the case of St Heliers Bay, 3,000 books. The renovated building was opened by Councillor Ellen Melville on 13 June 1931.

The ideal location of the Tamaki branch (which changed its name in the mid-1950s to St Heliers Bay branch)[97] and the rapid growth of the district once the slow ferry boat link with the city was replaced by road was to make it necessary to add to the library several times in the years ahead; in 1937, in 1956 and, most extensively, in 1979.

In the short term, the people of Avondale were not quite so well served. All that seemed available for a library for them in 1930 was a room above the entrance to the Avondale town hall at the corner of St Georges Road and Great North Road. Ellen Melville quickly ruled that out as both too small and too inconvenient. There was, though, an old wooden building dating from about the 1860s next to the town hall. It had been – yes, yet again – the borough offices and hall.

Once more the city council carpenters were put to work, the books bought, one member of staff detailed to be librarian, and the Avondale branch was opened by Ellen Melville on 27 June 1931, exactly a fortnight after she had officiated at a similar ceremony in St Heliers Bay.

And so, from what was little more than a shed, one of whose sides was weather-boarded, the other of corrugated iron, Avondale readers would borrow their books for the next 42 years.

After Avondale, there would be no further amalgamations with Auckland city. For the time being, the last link had been added to the chain of eight branch libraries (nine if one were to count the semi-independent Leys Institute). Thirty-four more years would pass before another was set up. And a further 19 years before John Barr would again have to consider seriously making use of a "library on wheels" in areas of Auckland city which would develop rapidly in the years following the second world war.

18

THE MUNN-BARR REPORT

THE EARLY 1930s saw New Zealand deep in the world-wide economic depression that began in the United States late in 1929. With people watching their pennies, it was obviously with some satisfaction that Barr was able to comment in his annual report for 1930-31: "It is perfectly clear that, among the bought pleasures, subscribers have decided that reading good books from the library is one of the last they will

sacrifice." And he noted the demand in what he called the more "serious" class of reading, for works of sociology, philosophy and religion.

The visit in 1932 of the J.C. Williamson Imperial Grand Opera Company had also sparked interest in the new music section, from which some 5,000 volumes had been borrowed in a year. As a help to readers, the staff at central had begun in 1930 the issue of a quarterly printed booklet, *The Library Tower*. Here readers could check under broad subject headings details and locations within the central and branch library system of new additions to stock. Unfortunately, because of poor sales, the publication had to be discontinued in 1932 after only seven issues. It was replaced with a typed list, given free.

John Barr's standing in his profession was evidenced twice in the 1930s. In May 1932 the Carnegie Corporation of New York offered him a visitor's grant to study library practice in the United States. The council allowed him six months' leave on full pay, from August of that year.

For the well-being of the public library service in Auckland, he could not have gone at a better time. The call in the city council to shut down branch libraries would not be heard for a further 22 years. Barr did well, in his report on his return to emphasise that, even in times of recession, Americans would consider closing public libraries "to be an evil second only to the suspension of public schools".[98] He stressed yet again the fact that all American libraries, like all English public libraries, were free in all departments. "Perhaps the greatest reason for the generally adequate funds which American libraries enjoy, is due to the fact that the library is accepted as part of the educational system of the country. Libraries are not a bone of contention, and no one is called upon to apologise for their existence. They are universally recognised as an essential part of the cultural life of the community in the same way as education is." [99]

Within a year or so of his American study tour, John Barr was to find himself in a position of influencing library development in New Zealand beyond the bounds of Auckland. Members of the Libraries Association of New Zealand realised, in 1933, that library development in this country had not kept pace with that particularly of Gt Britain and the United States.

The association, therefore, requested the Carnegie Corporation to make a survey of all types of libraries in New Zealand, and suggest possible lines of development.

The corporation agreed, and named as its representative, Ralph Munn, the director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (who was also to survey the Australian library scene). Munn chose as his local assistant, John Barr. Conscious of the honour that was being paid it, the council released Barr for the two months (April and May of 1934) that it took him and Munn to visit all cities in New Zealand of above 10,000 population (except Nelson), all university libraries (save for Lincoln College in Canterbury) and a representative group of borough, school and special libraries.[100] Ralph Munn alone carried out the survey of the Auckland Public Library system.

He praised it as being the oldest, largest and most fully-developed in the country. And

he admired the way it had been administered by John Barr, who was a trained librarian, to the point where it had achieved technical excellence, and created many of the services which marked the better city libraries of England, Canada and the United States.

Munn was quick, all the same, to point out Auckland's greatest fault. Like most other public libraries in New Zealand, it continued to cling to the outmoded subscription plan. This, he emphasised, seriously restricted the use made of the library. He noted that the quality of reading in Auckland was not so low as in many other libraries he had surveyed, because of the strong stand taken by the librarian in refusing to cater for the lower reading tastes of subscribers, and to the generous support given him by an intelligent library committee.

Auckland was, nonetheless, an outstanding example of the poor economy of the subscription plan. If the city council felt that it could not abolish the subscription plan in the immediate future, and make the library free to ratepayers and residents, Munn thought it should at least offer free service to children. Auckland was, after all, providing free library books in primary schools. The extension of such a service from the public libraries seemed to him a logical step.

Branch libraries in Auckland came under Munn's scrutiny, too. He thought most of them were well planned, but deficient in both bookstock and the number of assistants employed. He urged that no more be established until the existing ones were better provided with stock and staff – and better qualified and better paid staff at that. He was obviously aware that dogcatchers and pound-keepers in the city council were paid about £45 ($90) a year more than three of the branch librarians; also that the central library's messenger on an annual salary of £300 ($600) was at least £80 ($160) a year better off than some of the library staff.

Finally there was Leys Institute. Munn's findings were that the collections were well-chosen, but that part of their value was lost by placing too much of the non-fiction in the reference department. He questioned the policy of Ponsonby's having so large and scholarly a collection tied up in what was, after all, a branch library. In urging the development of popular free library service to children and adults, he pointed out the inevitable over-lapping and waste of money and effort in having two independent libraries in the same city.

19

THE DEPRESSION AND AFTER

IMPLEMENTING much of what Munn, and obviously Barr, recommended for Auckland, was to be delayed by the depression and by another war. Although free library service was planned to be introduced early in 1939, a further seven years were to pass before it was achieved. To its credit, though, the council did allow free borrowing by the children of ratepayers and residents from 28 June 1934. So popular was the change, that more than a thousand children enrolled as members at central library and the branches in the first fortnight of free service. Fewer than 700 had been members under the subscription system.

Like other city council staff, librarians and library assistants had their salaries reduced by 10% in the depression year of 1931. In council a member even had a motion carried that "In order to spread employment in these days of stress, it should be the policy of the Auckland City Council not to give employment to any woman whose husband is in permanent employment, except with the consent of Council." He said he had in mind "a janitress" of one of the suburban libraries.[101]

The council was, however, considerate of those unable to afford the cost of an annual subscription because they were out of work or because of other financial difficulties. Such readers were to be allowed to borrow free of charge for 12 months from April 1932. The move allowed them at least to keep abreast of some of the better and more durable fiction being published at that time; Somerset Maugham's *Cakes and Ale*, for example, Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. All the same, it was not without significance that, whereas membership figures rose slightly that year at central library and at the branches at Remuera, Epsom and Pt Chevalier, decreases were reported from the less affluent suburbs of Grafton, Grey Lynn and Parnell.

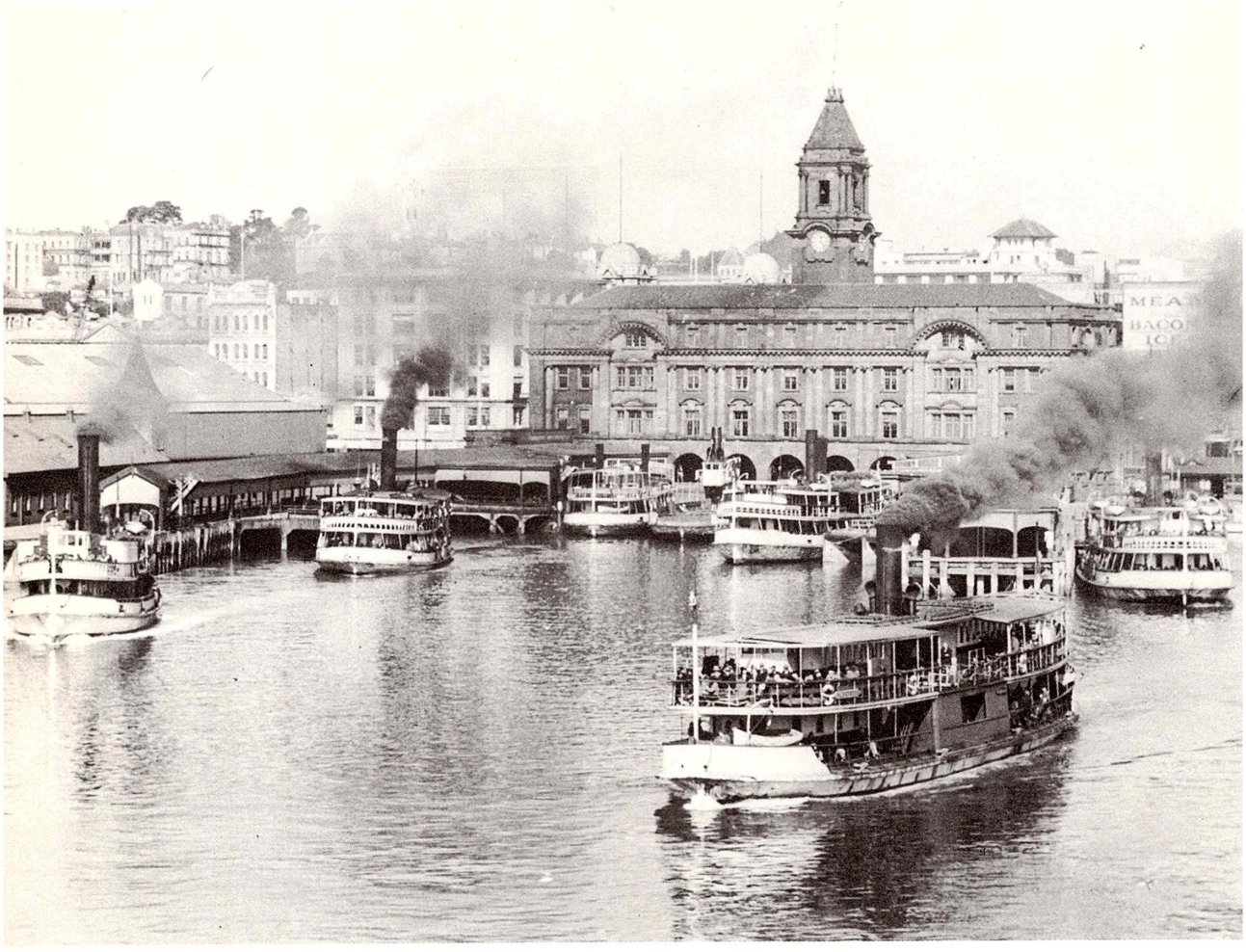
For unmarried men living in what were called "relief camps" around the country in the depression years, the library put aside whatever could be spared in the way of titles of light fiction and back numbers of popular magazines. For those who found work hard to get in the city, the reference department and the reading room became popular places in which to pass the time. Patrons in 1932 would, however, have to put up with the noise of hammer and saw, pneumatic drill and concrete mixer. The damp of nearly half a century was found to have affected the floors of the reading room and other parts of the ground floor. Seepage of water from Albert Park was to blame, along with a lack of

Within a year of this 1935 photograph, the Embassy cinema would open for business on the corner of Lorne Street and Wellesley Street East. By the early 1960s all the buildings except the Embassy would be demolished in preparation for the building of the first stage of the new library.

Auckland Public Library

efficient damp-courses in the walls and sufficient space under the floors. As part of the remedial work, joists were insulated from the walls of the building and bedded on dwarf concrete walls, with the space between these and the main walls being filled with coarse scoria. Having done all this, and improved the ventilation as well, the engineers hoped that further trouble would be avoided for a long time. It was not. It was the kind of problem that was to recur time and again over the next 40 years.

With the worst of the depression over, John Barr had expected patronage at the public library to revert to about the pre-1931 level. It was not to be. "That expectation has happily not been realised," he reported in 1936, "proving, I think, that people who learned to use the libraries during recent years are continuing the good habits formed in adverse times." [102] And that, for him, meant having to try to do something about making central library, at least, a more welcoming place for visitors and staff alike. A year before, he had described conditions there as "almost hopeless", with borrowers getting in the way of each other especially on Saturday mornings. He singled out the lending department for particular criticism. It had only 384 square metres of floor space



Half-day Saturday work done, city workers crowd the coal-burning ferries for Devonport, Bayswater, Northcote and Birkenhead. First away in this 1930 view is the *Albatross*. Extreme left is the *Ngoiro*, and, back at her berth is the twin-funnelled *Condor* alongside one of the vehicular ferries.

Auckland Public Library

into which were crammed 20,000 volumes and a desk for issue and return of books. Staff conditions he described as "deplorable". The only so-called office accommodation, apart from the desk on the ground floor, was a damp cellar actually underneath the staircase leading from Kitchener Street into the art gallery. And there, under artificial light, "all kind of work has to be carried out".

He was worried, moreover, about how the library could possibly cope with the demand that the projected free library service would generate. In 1936, only ten percent

of the population of Auckland city was enrolled as library members. Thirty percent membership could be expected once free service was introduced. "If the Auckland library is going to serve the citizens as they have a right to expect, something must be done without delay about adequate accommodation." [103] The official rejoinder to the chief librarian's plea – one that he had made several times before – was that the council was very aware of the congested conditions at the library and art gallery, and that "every means was being explored to relieve the situation." That was to be the standard reply for quite a few years to come.

Lack of library space was the reason for events connected with New Zealand Authors' Week in 1936 taking place in the art gallery. Sponsored throughout the country by P.E.N. (New Zealand branch), the week between 27 April and 2 May was intended to make readers more aware of the work of New Zealand writers. John A. Lee, well-known as a politician and a writer, was the principal speaker at the opening function, and there were displays of books by local authors and of older books and historical and bibliographical rarities on loan from the Auckland Public Library and the Auckland Institute and Museum.

Children continued to flock to the library in the second half of the 1930s. More would have gone there and to the branches had it not been for the outbreak of poliomyelitis late in 1936. Schools closed earlier than usual that year, and many parents would not allow their children to borrow books or go to the libraries while the epidemic was on.

Less welcome visitors flocked to the library, too. They were the pigeons, who obviously found the ledges and deep window surrounds ideal for resting and nesting. A correspondent to the *Star* in March 1935 admitted being charmed in Albert Park by the sight of a well-known character in the city feeding the pigeons, with the birds fluttering down to take grain from his hat, even from his mouth. He was less pleased with what he found a few yards down the street as he passed the public library. "The footpaths in a disgracefully dirty state," he wrote, "reflected an unpleasant view of the pigeons' activities. Many delightful and romantic emotions have entwined themselves about the pigeons that frequent the historic steeples of the big towns in the Old Country. Similar sentiments, highly desirable in themselves, appear to be developing in Auckland. The time seems to be arriving when the authorities will be required to balance the sentimental delights against practical issues and take some action against the pigeon peril." [104] Years later the ledges of the library would be draped with a sticky glue to dissuade the birds from perching. In the meantime they continued to make their mark. Staff recall an incident involving John Barr himself. It appears that one sunny day he was returning to the library after the lunch-break, and walking with one of his senior assistants. "J.B.", who was quite bald, seldom went out without a hat. This must have been one of the unusual days. Just as he was about to enter the building, one of the birds above scored a direct hit. He varied not one step, commenting only "Aye, aaah. Just as well elephants don't fly!" To those who remembered the old library it was ironical that when conges-

tion made it imperative to move some departments to a building elsewhere in the city, it was to one previously occupied by the firm of E. W. Pidgeon.

Annual issues from all departments of the Auckland public library system (including Leys Institute) first topped the one million mark in the period April 1934 to March 1935, when 1,068,350 loans were recorded. In 1935-36 the total moved to 1,083,291. In 1936-37 there was the first recorded decline in issues in 14 years. It was only slight. But when in 1937-38 the total dropped once more below the million, the council asked the reason.

John Barr could have replied in just two words – "Shop libraries." He did, however, prepare an exhaustive report.[105] He reminded councillors that the 1.2% decrease in issues in 1936-37 had been entirely in the field of fiction. Issues of general literature and children's books had increased. When these shop or "commercial" libraries had first appeared, he had described them as "an unknown quantity, the effect of which could not be foreseen". In retrospect he found it surprising how slight their effect had been on the public library. "The public libraries need not be concerned at the advent of the commercial book clubs. Let those clubs take on themselves, if they want to, the task of meeting the demand for light and ephemeral reading," said Barr. "It is a task which the public libraries can gladly relinquish; and in doing so it will leave them free to develop along the lines of the best English and American libraries." By 1939, Barr would have to admit, all the same, that there had been a quite remarkable growth of private circulating libraries or book-clubs all over New Zealand. They offered proof, if proof were needed, that the development of radio and the talking picture had not lessened the love of "light" reading. Trade directories of the year 1939 listed no fewer than 173 such commercial book-clubs in the area of Auckland city alone, their number having doubled in just 12 months.

In many cases, their customers were young people attracted by the sight of the books in their original paper jackets. While reprinted fiction made up the bulk of bookstock, the commercial libraries also rented new novels ("thrillers" being especially popular), and a generous sprinkling of popular biographies, and books of travel and adventure.

As if to point the finger at the row upon row of sober, uniform bindings in the lending department of the public library, the Strand Book Club, when it opened for business in Newmarket and in Wellesley Street West in Auckland in 1938, made great play of the fact that "each book as it goes out will have a clean, attractive cover and marker." The York Book Club did so well that it had to move from the Colonial Mutual building down Queen Street to larger, more central premises on the ground floor of the New Zealand Insurance Company. Not to be left out, the Farmers Trading Company was placing large advertisements in the newspapers in 1940 to tell readers how to get their weekend reading – "The library is situated on the lower ground floor right through the thrift department." And so, home would go each Friday with the groceries, Louis Bromfield's *The Rains Came*, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling*,

Rumer Godden's *Black Narcissus*, P. G. Wodehouse's *The Code of the Woosters* and Christopher Morley's *Kitty Foyle.*

20

THE SECOND WORLD WAR YEARS

THE 1940s were the heyday of the commercial book-clubs. Their decline began in the 1950s, and was hastened by the onset of television in New Zealand in the early and mid-1960s. And John Barr had been right. At no time did they really pose a threat to the public library, complementary as they were to other book-lending agencies, and catering as they did for a different class of reader. And the 173 of them in Auckland city, in 1939, had become exactly ten by 1979. And of those ten, not one was operating in the area served by the Auckland Public Library.

The second world war broke out in September 1939. There was only a remote chance that John Barr and his deputy Cunningham would be called into the armed forces. Each was by then over 50 years of age. There was, however, one other much younger man on the staff. In 1936 Barr had recommended the appointment of a male cadet. It had been eight years since there had been any increase of staff in the central library. Barr had felt for some time that it would be an advantage to have at least one additional male member appointed to the staff, preferably a university graduate. "I consider," he said in his report to the library committee, "that librarianship should not be limited to females, as it has been to appointments in the library staff during the past years, and this proposed appointment would do something to redress the balance." [106] David Hector Monro, who had completed a master's degree, was appointed to the position of male cadet, and began work in January 1938. He was later promoted to reference librarian.

When the war came to the Pacific following Japan's entry as the ally of Germany in 1941, 31 year-old Monro sought exemption from military service. He told the No. 1 Armed Forces Appeal Board that he advocated a negotiated peace, in the belief that no sacrifice would be too great to prevent the prospect of a war in this country with the Japanese. When asked what he would do if a Japanese assaulted his wife, Monro replied that he would do all in his power to stop him, as he would endeavour to stop a soldier of any nationality. His appeal was disallowed. He was dismissed from the service of the Auckland City Council, and imprisoned as a "conscientious objector". After the war,

Monro would become a lecturer at the University of Otago and, later, a professor of philosophy at Monash University in Melbourne. And there would be no third male member appointed as a library assistant until 1947.

For the women and girls of the library staff, there was plenty to do through the war years. All libraries became receiving depots for books, magazines and gramophone records for military camps in the Auckland area, and for ships of the Royal New Zealand Navy and Royal Australian Navy on convoy duties. A "drive" for books, organised by the junior chamber of commerce in late 1939, found the central library suddenly awash with over 16,000 donated volumes. By 1942, the government had set up the Army Educational Welfare Service. The AEWS, as it was generally known, took over the responsibility for processing and distributing all the donated material collected by the public library. In three years more than 400,000 books and magazines were gathered by the library, and by libraries in the province sending to Auckland the books they had collected.

What was for New Zealand probably the worst of the war years, 1942, was for the public library staff also one of the busiest. "Blackout" curtains were installed throughout the system to prevent the lighted buildings being spotted by enemy aircraft; blankets, quantities of sand, bucket pumps, hydraulic reels and water supply points were provided in all libraries; the halls at Epsom, Grey Lynn, Parnell and Remuera were designated headquarters of the Emergency Precautions Service (Grafton's had been incorporated into the library in 1941); members of the local units of the Home Guard (the home-defence force) had use of both the halls and the committee rooms; and the chimes of the clock in the tower of central library were discontinued to allow staff doing duty as fire-wardens to get to sleep more easily. In next-door Albert Park, slit trenches were dug, and a tunnel in which Aucklanders could take shelter from air attack, was driven in under the hill, with one of its entrances just above the library in Wellesley Street East.[107] It had been planned to move into the tunnel the more rare manuscripts and books from the library collections. Sensibly, however, and to give the items the best protection possible, the council arranged for them to be taken to the Waikato town of Te Awamutu, and put into the basement of a concrete building there. They were away for a little more than a year.

Despite the disruption of war, the year 1941-42 had been the best ever for the library so far as the number of books lent to borrowers was concerned – 1,218,470 to be exact. The staff, too, came in for congratulation from correspondents to the press. One went on record as saying that any librarian trained by John Barr "could no more commit a frivolous lapse in official duty at a branch library than a well-trained soldier could march out of step on a smaller parade ground." Anyone wanting to know what a librarian's life was like should try it: "For, say, the next 15 years or so, pass the necessary matriculation [university entrance] examination, exchange thousands of books, handle thousands of cards thousands of times, stand upright in the confined space thousands of

hours, read thousands of books and reviews during leisure hours, never mistake an Ethel M. Dell reader for a Dean Inge admirer, be official but kindly, tactful, bright, neat and literary-minded." [108]

The library staff probably had little difficulty in identifying an Inge admirer as opposed to a devotee of Ethel M. Dell. In the time between the signing of the 1939 non-aggression pact by Hitler and Stalin, and the Nazi attack on Russia in July 1941, the trouble was to tell how patrons would react to the sight of publications from the Soviet Union on the tables of the reference department. It certainly upset at least one Aucklander. In December 1940 he wrote to the *Herald*. "The City Council has not been very helpful in controlling the activities of communists. On 30 May I wrote to the City Council an urgent letter pointing out the danger of displaying on a table in the reference room of the public library a beautifully-illustrated and most cunningly-edited publication entitled *USSR in Construction*, which publication was generously presented to the library by the Friends of the Soviet Union. My letter must have caused Council some consternation, for the publication was immediately withdrawn from the table and I was informed that the matter would be investigated. The investigation took five months to complete, and on October 29 I was informed it would probably not be wise to ban the publication, and that no further issues were obtainable. I was consoled by the fact that, in the meantime, this source of contamination was not available to thoughtless citizens." [109]

Public attitudes were to change somewhat after the German attack of July 1941. But not necessarily at the official level. The "Aid to Russia" committee, for one, were unhappy that they had been refused in August 1941 the use of the hall at Grey Lynn library for a meeting. "All nations who are fighting Hitlerism and Fascism," its spokesman said, "must all band together in helping each other to win the war . . . We should not let internal problems of the country (such as Russia with a religious question) prejudice us on that count." [110] The committee still had to meet elsewhere.

Whether friend or foe of communism, Aucklanders suddenly wanted to know more about the Soviet Union. Even customers of the commercial book-clubs, the proprietor of one of which reported a "terrific" demand. "Anything with a Russian title is seized upon," she told the *Star*, "but the trouble with many of these books is that they've been written by ex-Czarists and feature events during and after the Revolution. They might justly be claimed to be Anti-Soviet propaganda. They do not present a true picture of Russia today. What the people want to read about is the true Russia without propaganda of any kind – about her industrial, social, commercial and economic life; about her geography and her people." [111] And it must have brought smiles to the faces of John Barr and his staff to read her closing comment that, "with the exception perhaps of those of the public library, such books are by no means as plentiful as the public would like."

And, remembering the episode of 12 years before with *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Barr could only consider how well the library came out of the contretemps that blew

up in 1941 over James Joyce's *Ulysses*. In Australia, the customs minister had banned the book, saying "it made his hair stand on end". He declared it to be "blasphemous, indecent and obscene", with hardly a page fit to read. Of course his ban produced a rush to buy the book. In Auckland it was rather different. *Ulysses*, which Professor W. A. Sewell described as perhaps the most important book of the 20th century, was studied in the university's English course. He considered that greater harm was done banning any book, since that only focussed attention on a particular aspect of it which people would not otherwise hear about. "And certainly few people would read *Ulysses* unless convinced of its literary merit." [112] A leading bookseller in town reported that he did not have either *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* in stock. "When the latter was published, a few 'literary-minded' people wanted it and got it." He admitted that *Ulysses* was not actually banned, but said booksellers would not take the risk that the police might at any time interest themselves in the book and make a test prosecution. Certainly no one could order it from a bookseller and hope to get it.[113] At the Auckland Public Library it was freely available. It was a case, as one wag put it, that "you pays your money, and you takes your Joyce!"

Having to pay money before taking one's choice of books for home reading from the library would soon be at an end. The day that John Barr had worked and waited for for 32 years was not anticipated by some with quite the same degree of satisfaction. One such was Sir Cecil Leys, the president of the Leys Institute. As far back as 1938, when it looked as though free library service would start in early 1939, he had aired his concern at the annual general meeting of the institute. Noting the decline in membership of the libraries generally, he had placed the blame squarely on the commercial book-clubs. "It may be," he said, "that the action of a retiring library committee of the Auckland City Council in recommending the establishment of a free library system, had been influenced by the activities of these clubs, but that is probably not the whole case." Sir Cecil had felt that the proposals for the introduction of the service were at least premature. "This is one phase of the knowledge acquired by our librarian, through the philanthropy of an American millionaire that should be examined and determined on business lines, not so much tinctured by mawkish sentiment." [114] Another speaker on the same occasion was more direct. He believed that the trustees simply could not run the library without subscriptions.

Whatever doubts Sir Cecil Leys had were obviously diminished in the intervening eight years. But probably not dispelled until the Auckland City Council resolved, on the occasion of the fortieth birthday of the institute in 1945, to give it financial help to allow it to offer free library service along with all other units of the Auckland public library system from 3 January 1946.

21

FREE LIBRARY SERVICE

MUCH OF THE YEAR 1945 was spent in planning and carrying out the alterations needed for the introduction of a free library service.[115] The branches posed comparatively few problems. Considerable work was necessary, though, at the central library. The existing lending department on the Kitchener Street side of the ground floor was to hold fiction, and the collections of history, travel and biography. There would also be shelved in that room the books that made up the new, so-called "pay duplicate" collection. This comprised extra copies of popular titles of fiction and non-fiction, of which at least one copy would be bought for the free collection. All members would be entitled without charge to borrow two books and one magazine from the free collection. Everyone wanting to borrow from the "pay duplicate" section would be charged a small fee for each item borrowed.

The newspaper and reading room also became a lending department (generally known as No. 2 to distinguish it from the one holding mainly fiction No. 1). No. 2 lending department was to contain most of the non-fiction lending stock, along with the music collections brought down from the floor above. The newspapers were moved to smaller space in what had been the print room of the art gallery. This room lay at the extreme northern point of the building, and had a separate entrance from Kitchener Street.

In the inner vestibule of the library, a counter was installed for the return of books, and made long enough to hold the thousands of members' book and magazine "pockets", representing items out on loan. Opposite this counter and in the open space underneath the concrete and marble staircase, a desk was built for registration and general office purposes. Each of the two lending departments had an issue desk. Upstairs, the reference and children's departments remained largely unaltered.

"Rankist Socialism" was what one erstwhile library subscriber called the new free service. There was no doubt, though, of its popularity with Aucklanders. So great was the rush of the public to borrow on Saturday mornings that the staff of the branch libraries, without exception, agreed not to request closing on that day. At the central library, senior staff thought that they, too, should be on duty for lending books at the same hours on Saturday as the branches – even though Saturday morning borrowing at Wellesley Street was not particularly heavy. (Saturday opening at branches and, for

Sir William Cecil Leys, 1877-1950, generous benefactor of the Leys Institute. S. P. Andrew photo

the purposes of lending at central library, was discontinued late in 1947.) Welcoming the free service, the *Star*, nonetheless, did well to sound a couple of notes of caution. An editorial published just a few days before the changeover wondered whether borrowers would take as much care of the books when they had them issued free as they had done when they had to pay for them.[116] It seemed that some borrowers did not. Early in 1947 there were complaints of cake and biscuit crumbs left inside books by members of the public who evidently read while eating meals, and of tea "rings" caused by cups being placed on pages. Staff were even said to have discovered a squashed sardine used as a book-mark! They were to find their bard in A. R. D. Fairburn, who produced *A Litany for Librarians* on the occasion of a conference of the New Zealand Library Association in Auckland in 1953:

> From those who use books to squash bugs, beetles and spiders, and to prop up the corners of wardrobes and pianos,
> Good Lord, deliver us.
> From Constant Readers who eat chocolate, butterscotch, polonies, asparagus in butter sauce, or gobbets of fat bacon, and lick their fingers to turn a page,
> From spillers of ink, soup and cheap perfume, and from stains of blood,

beer, cocoa and children-in-arms,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From the husband who wants something exciting for his wife, and the wife who wants something to keep her husband quiet,
From the heavyweight lady who asks for something very light for the week-end,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From subscribers who are in good spirits and vice versa,
From middle-aged men who make passes at Dewey-eyed librarians,
Good Lord, deliver us.
From those who browse standing up like horses, from those who take root like trees,
From those who disagree volubly in ink-pencil,
From those who cut leaves with forefingers, cricket-bats, umbrellas, Table-knives, or anything else lying handy,
From those who come in three minutes before closing time with the light of Eternity in their eyes,
From those who insist on your recommending books, and abuse your bad taste when they bring them back,
From those who are very deaf and exceedingly garrulous,
From those who use library tables as bunks and produce ten degrees of frowst in the Reference Department,
From students of Salesmanship and Business Efficiency, from nail-biters and sniffers, from authors and book-reviewers, from pedants and prudes, from spittoon philosophers, from book-keepers and bores and Bumbles,
Good Lord, deliver us.

There was also the added problem that year of cuts in the supply of electricity. The *Herald* reported library books marked by candle-grease and, in some cases, slightly singed, and of the central library staff being troubled by members of the public insisting on striking matches to read books while the power was cut off between 5 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.[117]

Another concern of the *Star* was for the city ratepayer. "The cultural life of the community should benefit from this extension of library books to all city residents without fee. But it must be remembered that, although residents (and others with certain qualification) will be entitled to borrow books free of direct charge, the whole cost of the service now falls only on those who are also ratepayers."[118] It was a point that would have to be made time and again over the years. By law, the reference facilities of the library would remain free to all. Those who contributed nothing to the library

by way of rates or rent could not expect to get service on the same terms as those who did.

The increase in library membership and in issues was remarkable over the next several years. In 1943-44, under the subscription system, there had been 12,566 adult members and 1,032 children. After a year of free service, 22,829 adults and 6,397 children were registered as free borrowers. By 1950-51, the comparable figures were 30,000 and 8,187. Issues rose from 1,218,470 in 1943-44, to 1,478,369 in 1947-48, and to 1,744,543 in 1950-51. To meet these demands, the bookstock of the lending departments of central and the branches had increased from 240,050 (1943-44) to 278,386 (1947-48) and to 312,859 in 1950-51. The new service pleased the critics as well. In 1947, Lionel R. McColvin, chief of the City of Westminster Libraries, in London, visited Auckland. Interviewed by the press, he said it was his considered opinion, having inspected more than 250 libraries in the four months since he left England, that the Auckland Public Library system offered the best service in Australia or New Zealand. More than that, Auckland had achieved a library system that would not shame any city of comparable size in Gt Britain or America.

A year later, John Barr was to receive official recognition of his achievements – the award of the OBE (Order of the British Empire). He did not hesitate when a newspaper columnist asked him what had been the biggest moment of his professional life. "When we got free library service," was the answer.

22

THREE SCORE YEARS AND TEN

IN 1946 Barr still had six years to serve as chief librarian. He would be retired by the time of the library's 75th anniversary in 1955. In the circumstances the council was happy to have him organise a week of celebrations (under the catch-title of "Three score years and ten" in September 1950, to mark 70 years of public library service in Auckland – more than half of them under John Barr's guidance.

But first there was an important new type of service to be inaugurated. In 1947 the council had approved Barr's proposal to introduce a mobile library service for residents of some of the fast-growing suburban areas not close to established branches, or where post-war building restrictions prevented their early erection. The plan had been to build

a trailer or caravan type of library. When a suitable towing unit could not be found, the more conventional type of vehicle was substituted. It was a Bedford bus chassis, 24 feet long and able to hold 1,200 books on shelves, and a further 300 in reserve. For some years, the mobile library had its own bookstock of some 7,500 volumes kept at the garaging point in a building behind the Epsom branch. Wherever possible, stopping points were selected in shopping centres and in residential areas not well served by public transport.

Repeated advertising failed to find a suitable library assistant who could double as a driver. The mobile library thus began its service with a driver (he happened to be the mayor's elderly ex-chauffeur) and one library assistant. The popularity of the service soon made a second assistant necessary, but the staff of the van was again reduced to two with the appointment of a driver/assistant in 1968. It was not long, either, before the provision of a separate bookstock for the van was discontinued in favour of topping up its shelves daily from the stock of the branch nearest its garage (first at Epsom, then St Heliers Bay and then the central library).

No. 1 mobile library, as it became known, went on the road on 31 January 1950, serving the areas of Blockhouse Bay, Glendowie, Orakei, Mission Bay, and parts of Remuera and Meadowbank. Outside of Wellington, it was the first of its kind in any city in New Zealand.

In 21 years, mechanical trouble prevented No. 1 mobile library from maintaining its appointed schedule on only one occasion. And after a total of 27 years and when it was made redundant by two, bigger vehicles, it has continued to do service as the mobile library for the Takapuna City Council on Auckland's North Shore.

Assessing the annual reports of a number of New Zealand public libraries in 1950, a colleague of John Barr's referred to the obvious pride in achievement of the Auckland Public Library at the time of its 70th anniversary. "Its report," said R. N. O'Reilly, "is perfectly in character with the author, John Barr, and the library he has developed does purvey the feeling of monumental achievement. The satisfaction is invincible." [119]

Others, during the Three-score-years-and-ten week of exhibitions, radio talks and a conversazione, were to make their tribute warmer. Again, Rex Fairburn put it well; "If you want to see John Barr's monument, go into the public library and look about you. But let me say this: I've known Mr Barr for many years. He's not what I call an old man – not by a long chalk – but he's old enough for one to expect a certain rigidity of mind to have set in, as it does with most men as they get past middle-age. You *expect* it. But, in his case, it simply hasn't happened. He has the most flexible and youthful mind of any man I know of his age and generation."

For John Barr the occasion was also one for reminiscence. Although he had never met Governor Grey, he rated Sir George as undoubtedly the dominant personality in the history of the library. "I have used his study chair for nearly 37 years," Barr said, "and it may be that some occult power has enabled me to understand something of his

greatness. So potent has his influence been on the public library, that I feel as if I had known him."[120]

He spoke with obvious affection of Ellen Melville, who had been chairman of the library committee for 25 years, and president on three occasions of the New Zealand Library Association. Characteristic of her Scottish forebears, and with her regard for learning, she had always wanted to see the library become more educational in its outlook. At the same time, the canniness in her nature made her cautious of change. When the question of free library service came up, it had taken Barr some time to convince her of its wisdom. Once she had decided that it was the right thing to do, she had battled for its achievement. She died in July 1946, having seen the free library service initiated some six months earlier.

Thomson Wilson Leys was, for Barr, the most dynamic personality to have been associated with the library. He was a typical example of the self-made man of his time, and the one who locally and nationally did most to foster the library movement in New Zealand.

Henry Shaw was of a different stamp. By nature unassuming, he was extremely well-read – "wide rather than deep," as Barr expressed it, "and he could talk and loved to talk on any subject from dogs to diabetes." For the last 15 years of his life, Shaw spent half the day at the library working on his collection of books. Public life had little appeal for him. He was happier checking booksellers' catalogues, or listing the early printed books and manuscripts of his own and the Grey Collection.

Barr recalled others who had frequented the building on the corner of Wellesley Street and Kitchener Street. "A library," he reminded his listeners at the conversazione, "because of its thoroughly democratic basis attracted to it all kinds of personalities, the crank and the saint, the humble and the exalted." Among the writers he recalled as familiar to him and his staff over the years had been Frank Sargeson, John A. Lee, Robin Hyde (Iris Wilkinson), A. R. D. Fairburn, Alan Mulgan, his son John Mulgan, Jane Mander, R. A. K. Mason, Mona Gordon, Gloria Rawlinson, Eric Baume, Isabel Maude Peacocke, Hector Bolitho, Geoffrey de Montalk, Elsie K. Morton and Eric Ramsden.

The last in the roll call of personalities remembered by John Barr, was his predecessor, Edward Shillington. Shillington's term of office covered 33 years, after which he was appointed co-curator, with Henry Shaw, of the Grey Collection, until each resigned the position in May 1915. Barr recalled how Shillington had had persons convicted in the police court for theft, and even on one occasion on a charge of personal assault. "I have to confess," Barr told his audience, "that I have appeared in court in connection with cases of thefts from the library. Up to the present, I have been luckier than my predecessor, as far as physical attacks are concerned. Perhaps my lack of stature has been an advantage."

23

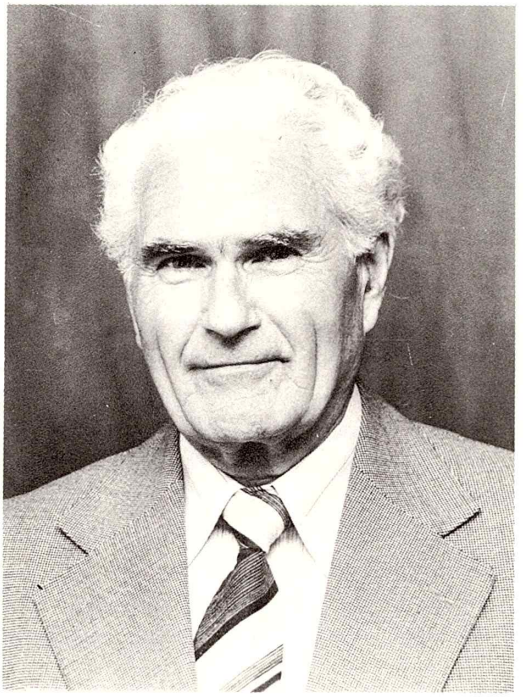
A CHANGE IN COMMAND

FOR AUCKLANDERS emerging from the heartbreak and the inconveniences of war and its aftermath, the decade just beginning was to be one of both pleasure and sorrow.

The war-time hangover of petrol and butter rationing was lifted in January 1950, just as the city was playing host to the very successful fourth British Empire Games. In May 1953, a bee-keeper from Papakura, named Edmund Hillary, was the first man to stand on the summit of the world's highest mountain, and at the end of her coronation year, Queen Elizabeth II became the first reigning British monarch to visit New Zealand. Six years later, in May 1959, the opening of the harbour bridge put out of business all the Waitemata Harbour's vehicular ferries, and all but one of its passenger services (that to Devonport).

At the other extreme was the sight of New Zealand soldiers marching again to war, this time in Korea in 1950. In the following year the nation was paralysed by a prolonged and bitter strike by waterside workers and, in the country's worst rail disaster on Christmas Eve 1953, 154 passengers and train crew were killed when the Auckland-bound overnight express from Wellington plunged into the flooded Whangaehu River at Tangiwai.

It was also the decade that saw the introduction of off-course betting operations begun by the Totalisator Agency Board (TAB) in 1951; the last tram running through the streets of Auckland in 1956; inner-city Princes Street selected, in 1958, as the site for future university development; and, also in 1958, electric power generated from geo-thermal steam at Wairakei, and from coal at Meremere. For the city council they were ten notable years. The earliest flats for pensioners were built in Surrey Crescent near the branch library in 1952; parking meters made their appearance in the streets a year later; the municipal vehicle testing station in Newton put through its first car (the mayoral limousine) in November 1956; the earliest of the council's car-parking buildings opened for business in Britomart Place in 1958; and in 1959 D. M. Robinson ("Robbie") began his record-breaking tenure of office as mayor of Auckland. Using the new screening techniques of Cinemascope, Cinerama and 3-D, picture theatres vied with each other from 1953 in mounting Hollywood's counter-attack to a threat – television – that still lay almost another decade in the future so far as New Zealand was concerned.



Robert Duthie, OBE, city librarian from 1953.
Auckland Public Library

Through it all, Aucklanders continued to use their libraries and to read. In the year 1952-53, membership of the Auckland Public Library system was 34,668. By 1963-64 it had grown to 53,000. The annual issue in 1952-53 was 1,576,165. By 1963-64 the figure had increased to 2,143,742. And that had been achieved with the addition of only the small mobile library and the restricted service being offered by the temporary branch in Glen Innes.

But that looks ahead. The early 1950s were to be years of change in the higher echelons of the library staff.

Within the space of little more than twelve months the library had to replace its two senior officers. The first to go was the deputy chief librarian, Cunningham. Gentle, kindly "Abe" Cunningham turned 65 years of age on 27 February 1951. For 30 years he had been Barr's faithful lieutenant. Never seeking the limelight, he had dedicated himself to achieving and maintaining the high standards of cataloguing and classification for which the reference department of the Auckland Public Library became renowned in New Zealand. In this he had the expert collaboration for many years of Miss G. M. K. Terry as the department's cataloguer. (From 1953 Gertrude Terry would hold the position of the library's chief cataloguer until her retirement in 1965.) And the firm and methodical control Cunningham exercised over the day-to-day operation of the library was reflected in excellent staff relations and in the reputation that the central library had of being a happy place in which to work.

On his retirement, Cunningham offered to revise the catalogue of the manuscripts in the Grey and Shaw Collections. Henry Shaw had prepared a catalogue for publication in 1908, but it hardly measured up to the standard required by modern bibliography. For an honorarium of £50 ($100), Cunningham completed the task with distinction in little more than a year. A bachelor, and never a man in robust health (he had been wounded in the first world war while fighting with the Cameron Highlanders in France), "Abe" Cunningham died in 1954.

Cunningham's successor was Robert Duthie, who was representative of the post-war breed of professional librarian. Scottish-born (the Shetland Isles) in 1917, he had come to New Zealand with his parents at the age of ten. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in arts at the Auckland University College in 1939, having studied philosophy and Latin to advanced stages.

Moving to Australia in late 1939, he began study at Sydney University for a master's degree in psychology, but did not continue when war broke out. In 1941 he was commissioned a sub-lieutenant in the anti-submarine branch of the Royal Australian Navy, and later became a lieutenant.

In 1946 Duthie was one of 25 men and women university graduates selected for the initial diploma course of a full academic year's study of librarianship at the Library School in Wellington. He was one of the outstanding students of his year.

Seeking to appoint his first male assistant since Monro, John Barr asked the opinion of the school's director, Miss Mary Parsons, and Geoffrey T. Alley, the director of the national library service, as to the progress of "the ex-naval officer" whom he recalled interviewing when he had been a member of the selection panel in late 1945. Mary Parsons' answer was that "he has a faculty in his work of selecting what is important and expressing it clearly and briefly. He is, in fact, a student I had hoped to have on my own staff until I heard of your opportunity." Geoffrey Alley said briefly; "Duthie is splendid. You can't go wrong."

Duthie became reference librarian of the Auckland Public Library on 6 January 1947. Just over two years later, on 7 June 1949, and in order to broaden his experience, he was transferred to the position of librarian-in-charge of lending services. On 28 February 1951 he succeeded Cunningham as assistant chief librarian.

On the same date as Duthie took control of the lending services of central library, he was replaced as reference librarian by Wynne Colgan. Five years younger than Duthie, Colgan had been briefly employed as a clerical cadet by the Auckland City Council before being mobilised by the army late in 1941. Discharged in mid-1946 following a period of service in the Pacific area with the ground staff of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, he had in the same year completed a bachelor's degree in Auckland, majoring in English and history. He was a member of the second diploma course of the Library School in 1947, and early the following year assumed responsibility for the municipal reference library in the town hall.

As early as 1911, when the town hall and municipal offices were opened, a room had been set aside as a library to hold literature on municipal government and administration for the benefit of councillors and staff. Around its walls were glass-fronted cases to hold such books, periodicals, reports and the like as came the way of the council, mostly as donations.

No action had been taken in 1919 when Barr had recommended the appointment of an officer full-time to set up and run a reference service on a proper basis. All that had happened was that a small sum of money had been allocated to buy suitable material.

Proposals to establish a reference library of a more satisfactory kind were made from time to time, but they always stopped short of the engagement of a trained librarian. In 1936 the council went halfway to meeting John Barr's recommendation when it appointed a full-time, but still non-professional assistant, Miss Edomy King Mason. When she resigned two years later, the position of municipal reference librarian was once more down-graded to a part-time one. An officer on the staff of the town clerk's department was detailed to give the library such time as he could spare from his duties involving committees and cash receipts for miscellaneous payments. After that officer was called into the services, progress was halted, and for the next eight or so years the reference library in the town hall merely existed. Few additions were made to stock, and patronage of the library was mainly of the self-help kind.

When remodelling of the town clerk's department of the town hall was undertaken in 1948, Colgan and the stock of the municipal reference library moved from a room that had been shared with clerks and typists to new and slightly larger quarters on the same floor. There the material that had been accumulated over the years was "weeded", new books, periodicals, reports and technical papers were acquired, classified, catalogued and made available to councillors, to the staff of the numerous civic departments, to officers of other local authorities and, when central library was unable to satisfy requests, to the public.

One of Colgan's particular assignments was the compiling of a roll of benefactors of the city of Auckland. From its earliest days Aucklanders have been noted for their generosity by way of bequests and benefactions. The idea of compiling such a roll had first been raised by the mayor, Sir Ernest Davis, in 1938. He thought it should be prepared in time for the proposed centennial celebrations in 1940. Reporting on the proposal, Barr said he knew of no precedent for it, but that the plan appealed to him.

The outbreak of war in 1939 was to preclude Auckland's having its 100th birthday party, and to delay work on a roll of benefactors for a further ten years.

In 1948 the council again adopted the principle of compiling a roll of benefactors and Wynne Colgan was instructed to prepare a preliminary list. The sum of £250 ($500) was to be the minimum contribution to qualify for inclusion on a roll that would record organisations as well as individuals.

There was no problem with the major donors; with, for example, Grey and the

brothers Shaw, Costley, John Logan Campbell, Mackelvie, the Leys brothers and William Mason, J. E. Elam, H. E. Partridge who gave the Lindauer Maori paintings, William Arrowsmith, who founded the orphans' home, Henry Brett, Arthur Myers, Moss Davis, Alex Dingwall, John Court, the Winstone brothers, James Dilworth and the Caughey family. The trouble was with those – often church affiliates – who wished to remain anonymous. That, and the fact that the minimum sum of only £250 ($500) was, even in those days, to add considerably to any listing of generous Aucklanders.

In 1956 the council accepted Duthie's recommendation for not going ahead with the publication of the roll as originally planned. Instead, they decided to read the roll from the pulpit on the occasion of the special church service attended by the new mayor and councillors after each triennial election. Before even that could be done, it was realised that it was far too ambitious a proposition. Finally, the order was given to prepare the roll in suitable book form for retention in the central library.

A number of the principal benefactors to the city may be found in A. W. Reed's *Auckland, City of the Seas*,[121] and in G. W. A. Bush's centennial history of the Auckland City Council, *Decently and in Order*.[122] A listing of the more outstanding benefactions to the Auckland Public Library and to Leys Institute appears as an appendix to the present volume.

When Colgan was transferred to the position of reference librarian at central library, a qualified library assistant was appointed to take charge of the municipal reference library under his direction. Within a short time, however, the municipal reference library and its library assistant were returned to the general control of the town clerk to operate as a unit of his department. When the council administration building was completed in 1966, the municipal reference library was transferred from the town hall to the 12th floor of the new building. Nine years later, in 1975, the library (though still located in the administration building) came under the jurisdiction of the city librarian, to be operated as a section of the Auckland Public Library system.

On 28 July 1952, John Barr reached the compulsory retiring age of 65 years. Compared with the activity-filled seven days in September 1950 when the library had celebrated its 70th anniversary, Barr's last week at work was a quiet one.

From the mayor and councillors he received an illuminated testimonial in appreciation of the service he had rendered over almost 39 years as chief librarian.

At a staff farewell function, Miss D. L. Haszard, librarian-in-charge of lending services, presented him and his wife with a radio "to remind you both how much the library owes to you."

Dulcie Haszard had joined the staff as a junior assistant in 1913, the same year as John Barr had taken up his appointment. She referred to his early training in Glasgow under the austere and autocratic F. T. Barrett, "an excellent librarian, but one who ruled his staff with a rod of iron." Like Barrett, Barr had always demanded from his staff the utmost in loyalty and the highest standard of endeavour, training them from his

professional "Bible," Brown's *Manual of Library Economy*.[123] Junior – even senior – staff who came to know the not-inconsiderable lash of his tongue could always console themselves with the thought that he would not have taken the trouble to berate them had he not felt that they were worth it as potential librarians. Unlike his former boss, Barrett, Barr had tempered austerity with approachability. When staff representatives went to him with a request for salary increases in the years of the great depression, he told them that "girls with twice your ability are walking the streets today looking for jobs at half your wages." But, as Dulcie Haszard reminded her listeners, "We did get our increases, and it was on Mr Barr's recommendation to the council."

It was a boast of "J.B.'s" that he knew everything that went on in his library. Certainly there was no point in trying to bluff him as to which book was and which was not in stock. When selecting books – and he saw all that came to the library – he would say, like as not, "We have an edition of this one, see what the difference is!" And his concern for the welfare of those who worked under him was as paternal as his memory was prodigious. In the days when the hours of opening of the library were long and Saturday duties were regular, it was he who persuaded a reluctant council to close the libraries on one night of the year for a staff dance.

From Wellington, Dr G. H. Scholefield, the librarian of the General Assembly (i.e. parliamentary) Library, spoke for John Barr's senior professional colleagues when he described him as "thoroughly efficient, confident in his efficiency and devoted to his profession". On behalf of the public, A. R. D. Fairburn put it succinctly; "Need I say it – he's done a great job for Auckland!"

In 100 years the Auckland Public Library has had no more than three chief librarians at the helm; Edward Shillington for 33; John Barr for more than 38; and, to date, Robert Duthie for 27 years. It is a record unparalleled in the city's administration. But the story of how Robert Duthie assumed the position of city librarian reflects credit on almost no one but Duthie himself.

With Barr soon to retire, the council called applications within New Zealand for his successor. (The new city librarian would no longer control the Art Gallery, which would have a director of its own;[124] nor the Old Colonists' Museum, for which John Barr would become curator.)

Four applications were received for the £1,350 ($2,700) a year post. Robert Duthie, the assistant chief librarian, was recommended by the library committee for the position on 7 April 1952. He was appointed later the same month, only to find his promotion criticised in the council on the grounds that the qualifications of another candidate were superior. The councillor concerned wanted the position re-advertised overseas as well as throughout New Zealand. Although his motion lapsed for want of a seconder, he received outside support in the form of a letter from a group of university staff. They, too, wanted to know why applications had been restricted to New Zealand librarians,

claiming that standards could be maintained only if tested in open competition with the outside world.

The council decided to reconsider the appointment and suspended Duthie's promotion in the meantime. In June 1952 the library committee again recommended to the council that Duthie should replace Barr. Again the academics protested and asked to be allowed to send a deputation to the next meeting of the committee. They came away from that meeting expressing "their continuing dissatisfaction with the methods employed by the civic authorities in the conduct of this affair".[125] Within the week Bob Duthie withdrew his application.

By no means all of the university staff were against the council's appointment. Professor W. Anderson of the university's philosophy department correctly pointed out in a letter to the *Star*, that the bad faith of those in the university protesting the appointment was shown by the fact that, instead of working up a protest at the time the council decided not to advertise overseas, they did nothing till the vacancy had been filled. "Is it too much to hope," Anderson asked, "that now Mr Duthie has withdrawn his application, the city may take steps to purge its present dishonour by adopting the well-established academic precedent of offering him the position?"

Nonetheless, fresh applications were called throughout the Commonwealth in July 1952. In the meantime, and with Barr now retired, Bob Duthie was appointed acting-chief librarian on 11 August 1952.

No fewer than 16 applicants put in for the post this time. Robert Duthie was not a candidate. Nor was the librarian whom the protesting university teachers had favoured first time around.

After almost 12 months of controversy, the city council decided unanimously on 5 March 1953 to re-appoint Duthie.

G. W. A. Bush summed up the whole unhappy affair when he said; "The council apologetically requested Duthie to accept the post, a decision the wisdom of which has never been questioned."[126]

Early in 1954 the council resolved to fill the vacant position of deputy city librarian. When applications were called throughout New Zealand four were received. The library committee recommended T. B. O'Neill, a senior staff member of the Wellington Public Library. Almost immediately O'Neill withdrew his application, claiming dissatisfaction with the commencing salary £900 ($1,800) and the conditions of appointment. The post was then offered to Wynne Colgan, who had been the reference librarian since mid-1949.

Once more, as in the case of Barr and Cunningham who were in tandem for 30 years, it was to be the beginning of a long partnership of city librarian and deputy which has to date spanned 26 years.

It took John Barr 33 of his 38 years as chief librarian to realise his ambition of free library service for those in the Auckland City Council's rating area. Eighteen years after

his appointment as city librarian (the designation was changed from "chief" in 1953), Robert Duthie saw the first stage of the long-overdue new central library in Lorne Street opened in November 1971.

In the centennial year of 1980, he knows he will be lucky to find the second stage in operation by the time of his retirement in 1982. He can, however, look back in pride and with a sense of real satisfaction on what has been achieved in 27 years – not least on the success with which he inaugurated a totally new type of library service to the business, commercial and industrial sector of Auckland. And on the quiet revolution which an essentially quiet man has directed in making it possible for more than 100,000 Aucklanders living outside the bounds of Auckland city to share in the free library service available to Auckland city ratepayers, residents and their families.

It would be two decades and more from the time Duthie took up his appointment in 1953, before he realised his twin goals of service to commerce and to the communities outside the city area. As this volume goes to print, the on-again, off-again chronicle of a completed central library continues.

Bob Duthie inherited a string of library buildings physically in need of urgent attention. The blame for their deterioration was not entirely Barr's. There had been a tendency, nevertheless – as there often is when retirement comes close and things are not done out of consideration of "tying the hands of a successor" – to let matters go by default. Duthie was all too aware of the need to refurbish a run-down branch library system, but he had to wait a couple of years before pressing that point.

24

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

THE OMENS FOR THE LIBRARY were not particularly favourable in 1953. It was an election year for mayor and councillors, and candidates were seeking ways to cut municipal costs even more assiduously than usual. Without explanation, the Citizens and Ratepayers Association, which controlled 18 of the 21 seats on the city council, dropped from its "ticket," W. M. Tongue, the chairman of the library committee. Another group, contesting the election for the first time as the curiously-named United Independents, and led by D. M. (later Sir Dove-Myer) Robinson, promised "to make libraries as far as possible financially self-supporting".

Such a policy statement drew immediate fire from J. W. Kealy, a previous (1944-50) councillor, and library committee chairman (1946-50). Lawyer John Kealy – the son of the bookseller who had sprung to the defence of public libraries in the censorship brush of 1925 – had resigned as a councillor when he was appointed a stipendiary magistrate. Now he spoke out as the patron of the New Zealand Library Association. "To try to make public libraries pay," he said, "would debase their educational function to the point where they would be forced to compete for business with the book clubs." And he drew an analogy with the National (now New Zealand Symphony) Orchestra. "It might well increase its gate-takings if it substituted swing for serious programmes. But to do so would be unthinkable."[127]

In the event, the United Independents took only five seats on the incoming council, and the free library service survived its first challenge since its inception seven years earlier. But not before a United Independent councillor, B. W. Barnett, had moved the closure of all branch libraries (including the mobile library) at the rate of two branches a year beginning with Parnell and Avondale in 1955.

Barnett's motion was defeated on a show of hands, and with the commendable if rather intriguing comment from another councillor that "the first thing Stalin would do if he came here would be to close our libraries!" Intriguing, if only because the Russian leader had been dead more than a year.

With these two hurdles successfully cleared, Duthie felt encouraged to draw to the council's attention the fact that in the five years since 1950, maintenance of the central and the branch libraries in Auckland had accounted for 13.8% of the total library expenditure. He contrasted that figure with the 2.1% it cost the Wellington City Council in the year 1954-55 to keep up its admittedly-new (1940) central and approximately same number of branch libraries. And he detailed for the council the situation at the branches. For almost 25 years Avondale had operated from a hall that was already more than 70 years old when it became a library in 1931. Of all the branches, Epsom was the one with the most institutional and neglected air and where the alterations recently carried out had left the building with an unfinished look, as well as with a slate roof that leaked continually. Grey Lynn was congested, with no adequate staff room facilities and a hall that was in a "deplorable" state. Like Grey Lynn, Parnell was suffering from neglect and overcrowding. Grafton, now inconveniently located with the shift of population, was a grim and forbidding reminder of what library buildings looked like in the early 20th century. Pt Chevalier, which had opened in 1926 in a building transported from Remuera, had by 1943 become the busiest of all the branches while remaining the smallest in size. Space at St Heliers Bay (erstwhile known as Tamaki) was at such a premium that, at busy times, patrons queued in St Heliers Bay Road just to enter the library. And prize-winning Remuera branch was vastly overcrowded, with a badly leaking roof and an urgent need to replan the interior to gain more space.

Obviously every branch needed attention, and each would get it to greater or lesser

degree over the next 20 years. For central library, though, there could be no delay.

Duthie did not wait until the new council had settled into office, before demonstrating what years of neglect and inaction had meant both for the building in Wellesley Street and for the public. "There is not sufficient room," he reported early in 1953, "to maintain present services with any degree of efficiency, apart altogether from the question of extending the library's activities. Nothing short of a major structural alteration or a new building will have more than a mere palliative effect."[128]

He was to receive support from the press. "A new library is well overdue," commented the *Observer*. "Ours is a poor comparison with other cities. Foresight was shown in 1887, but those who followed until now have been content to wallow in the bog of complacency."[129] Such remarks were really in the nature of admonition.

What Duthie and the city engineer, A. J. Dickson, came up with in September 1953 was clearly calculated to cause alarm. They pointed out the possibility of collapse of the upper floors of the old building through the sheer weight of books that the shelves and trestle tables had to bear. It was not, of course, included in the report of the two officers, but it was something of a wry joke among staff that even when "Abe" Cunningham, a wisp of a man, walked across the floor of the upper gallery the place shook. And it was certainly not in any spirit of fun that engineers placed pieces of sticky tape over the length and breadth of some of the cracks in the support arches, and that they returned frequently to check whether they had torn or not.

Duthie offered the council a choice: *a new library* on a new site, perhaps as part of a proposed civic centre in the area of the present-day Aotea Square; *modernisation* of the 1887 building once the art gallery was located elsewhere; *additions* to the existing library on the piece of open land on the Albert Park side between the reference department and art gallery; the *lease* of premises elsewhere in town in which excess bookstock could be shelved and to which some of the staff involved in ordering and preparing books could be moved.

Engineer Arthur Dickson concentrated on the fact that no major alteration or re-modelling had taken place at the central library in the 66 years since 1887; that the cracks in the bracing arches of the roof of the reference department were dangerous; that the massive walls of the building cut up space unnecessarily and uneconomically; that the natural lighting was quite inadequate now that bookcases obliterated most of the once-generous window space; and that the extensive slate-covered roof would need complete renewal within two years. For him the alternatives were a new library to be erected progressively on the existing site, or building in a totally new location.

On 19 September 1953 the council decided to adopt as a policy the erection of a new library on a new site (the art gallery was to remain in the present building). The first of the many milestones had been set up on the long road that would end 18 years later in half a library.

The site was approved at a further meeting of the council on 16 December 1953. It

would be the triangle of council land bounded by Wellesley Street, Rutland Street and Lorne Street. Alone of all the buildings on the site, the Embassy cinema would not be involved in the proposal meantime. Its lease was not due to expire until the mid-1970s. The preliminary cost was set at about £650,000 ($1,300,000), excluding fittings and equipment, and on-site tenants of the various factories, warehouses and retail shops were to be advised that building would start "probably within three years". A policy and a place had now been settled on. With the long-term outlook appearing suddenly brighter, Duthie was able to turn to matters needing immediate attention at central library.

25

THE REED DUMAS COLLECTION

FRANK WILD REED had died in Whangarei on 1 May 1953. By the agreement made with the Auckland City Council in 1926, space had to be made available quickly for his collection of more than 3,000 manuscripts and books by and about Alexandre Dumas. The room off the first floor landing on the Kitchener Street side of the building where the Lewis Eady Music Collection had been shelved originally, was made over into a replica of Reed's own library complete with his glass-fronted bookcases and desk. It was to be the home of the Reed Dumas Collection for the next 18 years. For a number of those years it would also be the office of the city librarian when, to give his staff more working space, he had to vacate the adjacent room.

The French novelist and playwright, Alexandre Dumas, the elder, almost certainly never heard of a small, kauri-gum town in New Zealand, called Whangarei. Yet it was in Whangarei, 170 km north of Auckland, that the author best remembered for *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and *The Three Musketeers*, was to find his bibliographer. It was there that a man who never visited France, never learned to speak French, and only in later life taught himself the French language, raised a memorial to one of the prodigies of literature. At the international level the name of Frank Wild Reed lives on in the Reed Dumas Collection, transferred from his home after his death in 1953 to the Auckland Public Library. Shelved now in the rare books room of the library, it represents the most comprehensive aggregation of literature by and about Alexandre Dumas outside of Paris.

Frank Wild Reed, 1874-1953, donor of the Reed Dumas Collection.

Dumas died in 1870 at the age of 68. In 50 years of frenzied composition, he probably produced more than Frank Reed was able to identify, immense though that tally was. Many of Dumas' contemporaries thought of him as chief of the school of second-rate writers of popular stories. To the German poet and essayist, Heinrich Heine, Dumas was "the most amusing story-teller after Cervantes". Dante Gabriel Rossetti considered him the sole descendant of Shakespeare. And Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of him: "I do not say that there is no character as well-drawn in Shakespeare as D'Artagnan. I do say there is none that I love so wholly." Dumas himself had no doubt of his place in literature. "Lamartine is a dreamer, Hugo is a thinker. As for myself, I am a populariser. I serve up to the public this excellent dish, which, from the hand of the first would have lacked nourishment, being too light, and from the second would have caused indigestion, being too heavy; but which, when seasoned and introduced by me, will agree with almost any stomach, the weakest as well as the strongest."

Such, then, was the writer who, in *The Queen's Necklace*, fired the imagination of a boy in England. This, thought young Frank Reed, was the way historical novels should be written. It meant nothing to him that Dumas was supposed to have exhausted some 90 collaborators, or that he took whatever written work he could get from whomsoever he could get it and gave it his own immense and radiant personality. Did not

Shakespeare? When he came to New Zealand as a boy of 12 in 1887, Reed had already the makings of his collection. And that surprised nobody who knew him. His younger brother, Alfred Hamish Reed, remembered him as the "brainiest of the family",[130] a voracious reader who had to be restricted to a certain number of pages a day. At the age of 14, Frank Reed started work as apprentice to a chemist in Whangarei. In 1911 he bought out the business, and from one side of the shop began to dispense medicine, and from the other to sell books. Whangarei knew him as an indefatigable chemist, open for business from eight in the morning till eight at night, and till 10 p.m. on Saturday, and always ready to meet an emergency call. Yet, such was the passion he had for the collection that was to bring him fame, that he was able, quite naturally, to list as his "recreations" in *Who's Who in New Zealand*, "Reading, translating and bibliography."

In 1926 Frank Reed retired from business to devote himself to the gigantic, self-imposed task of compiling the first comprehensive bibliography of Dumas' enormous output. By that date he had already translated into English and had typed and bound into volumes all the known 72 of Dumas' plays (five of them never before printed). With the help of R. S. Garnett, the son of the famous keeper of books at the British Museum, the collection grew apace. The two men had come to know each other ten years earlier. Reed had read Garnett's translation of *The Neapolitan Lovers* by Dumas, and had written to England to tell him how much he had enjoyed it. Soon after, Reed learned that one of Garnett's daughters was suffering from a disease that only milk and butter could help, and that her life was despaired of. War-time rationing made it impossible to get either in England. With a thoughtfulness that was characteristic, Frank Reed sent butter and powdered milk to such good purpose that the child recovered. In gratitude, Garnett in 1932 bequeathed to Reed his own collection of some 800 volumes by and about Dumas.

Among the manuscripts in the Reed Dumas Collection, are the holographs (manuscripts in the author's hand) of *Conscience l'Innocent* and *La Jeunesse de Louis XV*, and the entire manuscript of the work which Garnett translated into English and published as *On Board the Emma*. In addition, there are manuscripts of plays, poems, articles and letters, and some 1,700 volumes of printed versions of Dumas' writings, 239 of them being first editions. Translations into English total 450, and there are, as well, 90 volumes of typescript, 25 of them being plays and 13 devoted to bibliography of Dumas on which Frank Reed had been busy most of his life.

Reed's was a life-long labour of love that did not go unnoticed by the French government. As early as 1927 he had been named Officier d'Academie and, in 1934, awarded the higher rank of Officier d'Institution Publique "for services to French literature".

Frank Reed travelled little out of Whangarei, and was hardly known to the staff of the library in Auckland. Not so his younger brother, Alfred (later Sir Alfred) Hamish Reed, who came to head New Zealand's largest publishing house, climbed to the summit

of Mt Egmont at the age of 81 and, at almost 90, went on foot from Sydney to Melbourne. His not infrequent visits to Auckland held more than passing interest for the library staff. In 1935 he had presented to the library a handsome album of 50 portraits and autographed letters of correspondents as disparate as General Gordon and Cardinal Newman, John Ruskin and the Duke of Wellington, Thomas Lawrence the painter, and Daniel O'Connell. The album was supposed always to be on display in its own glass-topped case. There was usually forewarning in the press of an imminent visit to Auckland by the country's most widely-known walker. Vigil was kept, nevertheless. When an assistant at work in the library office which commanded an uninterrupted view down Wellesley Street East to Queen Street caught sight of the lanky, tousle-headed figure, pack on back, loping purposefully towards the Kitchener Street corner, the word would go up, "Here comes 'A.H.'!" and someone would be despatched at speed to make doubly sure that the case was indeed standing in the entrance vestibule, the album open. Often "A.H." would do no more than glance and go.

On one occasion he stayed long enough to watch a photographic display being assembled. The subject was the kauri-gum industry in New Zealand around the turn of the century. One view was of an old Dalmatian prospector probing for the precious gum with a tool that nobody had been able to identify. Knowing that 95-year-old Mr Reed had spent time on the gum-fields of Northland in his younger days, an assistant asked him did he know what the implement was? "No idea!" came the quick answer. "That must have been something they used after my time!" His "time" would have been from 1892 to 1895, when "A.H." was between 17 and 20 years of age!

Late in his life, Frank Reed was visited by the Scottish writer, Eric Linklater, then on a world tour that was to produce the book *A Year of Space*.[131] In it Linklater wrote; "It is an impertinence, I suppose, to say of any man that he is happy: but when, at seventy-odd years of age, a lively and ardent mind is discovered behind the placid mien of a life-long scholar – when an old man talks with the exuberance of youth about a subject to which he has been faithful for half a century – why, there is some reason for suspecting happiness. That the miscellaneous writings of Alexandre Dumas are of much importance in the atomic age may be doubted, and perhaps his romantic plays now only serve to satisfy an academic curiosity. But why should a man's work be utilitarian? If utility were the only standard, there would be no true excellence in work but only catchpenny toil. To work for love is to set a proper example, and if happiness is the profit, then the example is worth the scrutiny."

26

LAST POST FOR THE OLD COLONISTS' MUSEUM

ONE OF THE SECTIONS of the central library most urgently in need of increased working areas in the mid-1950s was the bookbindery. It occupied the smallish, circular room off the gallery of the reference department, and in which a decorated marble fireplace was a reminder of the days half a century before when artists and models of the school of art had shivered on the sunless side of the building.

To get extra space for the repair of books, binding of newspapers and stiffening of periodicals before issue, meant taking over the two nearby rooms on the warmer Kitchener Street frontage filled with the contents of the Old Colonists' Museum.

From the time of its opening in 1916, there had been no doubt as to the popularity of the "O.C.M." By 1955, more than 30,000 visitors a year had been prepared to puff up the two steep flights of stairs to gaze at the first plough to turn the soil of New Zealand, at the whalers' pots, the model of the proposed Whau canal to join the Waitemata and the Manukau harbours, the assorted photographs of people and places, the water-colours, the note-books, the bric-a-brac of Victorian Auckland. But, just as the number of exhibits donated or lent increased (from 327 in the year of opening to more than 1,300 in the next 20), so did the clutter of display cases and the filling of literally every foot of wall space from floor to high ceiling.

Even the mayor, G. W. Hutchison, in unveiling the splendid model made by E. T. Fairburn (the younger brother of A.R.D.) of the ill-fated steam corvette, H.M.S. *Orpheus*, was moved to remark in 1933 that, with proper facilities for display, the contents of the Old Colonists' Museum could do still better work than it had done. He hoped that an early opportunity would be taken "to remedy the present unsatisfactory situation as far as the congestive conditions are concerned".[132] It never was, even in the brief three years when John Barr took over as honorary museum curator after he stepped down from the position of chief librarian.

Late in 1956 the council decided to close the Old Colonists' Museum and to offer its contents to the Auckland War Memorial Museum in the Domain. With, however, some exceptions. Such items as maps, manuscripts, charts, literary documents and the like, were to remain with the Auckland Public Library for incorporation in the reference department. And the Auckland City Art Gallery was to have such of the works of art

as its director, Peter Tomory, wanted. It was not an arrangement to please Gilbert Archey, the director of the War Memorial Museum. He wanted all or nothing.

On Duthie's advice, the council resolved that the three-dimensional objects and exhibits which had been offered to Dr Archey would be stored (under the stage of the town hall) until satisfactory additional accommodation made it possible to reinstate the Old Colonists' Museum as an integral part of the reference department.

In the event, the new director of the War Memorial Museum, Graham Turbott, accepted the objects some nine years later for inclusion in the permanent exhibition, "Centennial Street", which the Auckland department store of Milne and Choyce Limited presented to the city in 1966.

One citizen was not at all sorry to see some of the assorted statues swept away with the spears and pot plants. He was the shy, elderly attendant who was detailed, far too frequently he felt, to attempt to wash away with soap and water the pencilled games of noughts and crosses played on the buttocks of a naked Venus by Canova which stood for years just inside the main doors of the library.

The "O.C.M." may have been "the old curiosity shop" that one councillor dubbed it. Even the "disgrace" that another considered it, "with photos of dead and gone people all around the walls".[133] Catalogued, classified and now shelved in the library, many of its diaries, documents, charts, maps, portraits and similar material have since proved to be invaluable sources of reference for historians, researchers and students.

There is no doubt, however, that the closing of the museum meant disappointment for generations of Aucklanders and visitors to the city. For them a Sunday afternoon looking at the Goldies in the gallery was not complete without a trip upstairs to run an eye over the contents of the Old Colonists' Museum.

27

ACQUISITIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FIFTIES

SEEN FROM THE OUTSIDE the central library gleamed whiter in the sun after its painting in 1950, if only briefly. The electric trams were to continue to run in Auckland until 1956, and Wellesley Street East being one of the busier routes, the dust from iron wheels striking iron rails was quick to take the bloom off the building.

Inside the library, small but significant changes were to improve the lot of both the staff and the public. Additional radiators were installed before the winter of 1952 on the ground floor on the chilly south side of the building. That was a boon for the music-lover absorbed till closing time in the scores recently received from the estate of the late Harold Baxter; and for the budding professional young men of the city waiting to escort home staff on late-night duty. As a columnist of the *Auckland Star* had it: "If a girl wants to wed a lawyer, accountant or architect – and if she has U.E. [University Entrance examination] and a sweet temper – she can't do better than the Auckland Public Library staff. Nose-count up there shows few remain unwed more than three years, and that they fall for young book-borrowing lawyers, accountants and architects in that order." [134]

There was still only a single telephone line into the library, linked to a few extension points in the public and office areas. The year 1952, though, was to bring the luxury of a limited network of internal house telephones. And keeping fit was no problem at all – there was no lift in the library. Staff continued – as they had done for 60 years and would do for the next 20 – to toil up the narrow, strictly one-lane staircase to their tiny staffroom at the level of the gallery of the reference department. Or go by the spiral iron stairwell one floor higher again to fetch and carry books and periodicals from the most distant stack areas. After dark they would go armed with torches. Although fluorescent tubes were installed in the public departments in 1953, there was little if anything by way of artificial lighting in the attics. The alternative to the careful one-step-at-a-time descent clutching in front of them unwieldy bound volumes of the *Herald*, the *Star* or *The Times* of London, was to make use of an ancient block and tackle arrangement, the careless loading or lowering of which could send its cargo crashing ten metres to the ground floor in a matter of seconds.

It came as good news to the staff in 1955 that the council and the publishing firm of Wilson and Horton had agreed to share the cost of recording on micro-film for use in the library all copies of the *New Zealand Herald* from the date of the first issue in 1863. That would overcome the trouble of transporting the bulky volumes for what could well be only a few moments' perusal in the reference department, and save wear and tear on many rare and some last-known copies. In 1967 a similar arrangement would be made with New Zealand Newspapers, which would ensure complete files of the *Auckland Star* always being available on micro-film for researchers, students and the public. Micro-film copies have also been preserved of all the early Auckland newspapers held by the library and all those that could be filmed from the files of other libraries.

In the first few years of Duthie's stewardship, the number of adult fiction issues from central and branch libraries combined was 752,300, representing 47.7% of total issues. The standard set by the parent body of professional librarians, the New Zealand Library Association, was 35%. For adult non-fiction borrowings, the figure was 410,058, or 32.3%, as against the NZLA standard of 35%. In the case of children borrowers

(excluding the service conducted through schools), there had been 313,807 issues, representing 20% of total issues, as compared with the standard of 30%. The imbalance was to change dramatically for the better in the years ahead. Duthie moved within the space of 12 months to begin to head off criticism of the library's high issue of fiction by recommending that the council replace Barr's "pay duplicate" scheme of 1946, with the more usual system of a "free and rental" plan. This meant that many titles (fiction in the main) bought for the "free" section and duplicated in a "pay" collection to satisfy demand quickly would, in future, be bought only for a "pay" or "rental" section, and be paid for by all borrowers wanting to read them.

There is a risk involved in operating a "free and rental" policy. Without regard for standards, it can be used as a money-making device by libraries relying on rental items to provide revenue for increased book buying. Carefully administered, it is generally acceptable to controlling authorities unwilling to adopt the kind of totally free service that has been long established in, for example, Gt Britain. In changing to the "free and rental" fiction policy in December 1954, Auckland swung into line with Wellington, Lower Hutt, Christchurch and Dunedin among the larger cities in New Zealand. And, as in those centres, certain classes of borrowers, such as those in receipt of age benefits, economic war pensions, and war veterans' allowances, were to be exempted from paying fees for reading from the rental collection. It may have been only co-incidence, but on 30 June 1955, central library recorded what was till then its greatest single issue on any one day – 2173 items.

Where Auckland merely followed in the matter of the "free and rental" policy, it gave the lead to its southern neighbours in 1957 in extending consideration to library users throughout New Zealand. This is what is known as the "reciprocal borrowing scheme". Production of a "home" membership card by readers on holiday elsewhere in the country, entitles them to borrow books and periodicals on the same terms as members of the library in the area they are visiting. For more than 20 years the service has been an integral part of the public library scene in this country.

Several notable benefactions and purchases were features of the 1950s. In 1953, the Carnegie Corporation of New York announced that it was offering to a limited number of public and university libraries in the British Commonwealth a collection of 350 books portraying contemporary American civilization and exploring its origins. The Auckland Public Library was the only municipal one in the country to be presented with a set.

Samuel Vaile was the founder of a well-known Auckland firm of real estate agents. He was also a leading advocate of the development of a railways system in New Zealand. His son, E. Earle Vaile, was a pioneer of the pumice lands of the Taupo region in the early years of the 20th century and, like his father, deeply interested in the expansion of the rail system of the country. In 1954 Earle Vaile presented to the library an extensive collection of his father's manuscripts and letters, books and diagrams of the rail systems he had advocated. Samuel's cabinet desk, containing much of the donated material, went

into the collection of the Old Colonists' Museum, the documents and books to the New Zealand section of the reference department.

The same year saw the Minister of Education, Arts and the Sciences for the Netherlands select the Auckland Public Library ("as the greatest library in a university town")[135] to be the only recipient in New Zealand of a complimentary copy of the great Dutch encyclopaedia, *Winkler Prins*. And it so happened that 1954 was also the year that the library made available a collection of books in Dutch mainly for the benefit of emigrants from what had been known as the Dutch East Indies, and would henceforth be called the Republic of Indonesia. The bulk of the collection was made up of books already held by the local Dutch Club and the Netherlands Red Cross, both of which groups readily donated their holdings to the library.

Pleading lack of finance, the library committee in 1954 had "regretfully" decided against the purchase for 175 guineas ($367.50) of a copy of the sumptuous *Coronation Album*. The album had been produced in a limited edition of 252 in London in 1953 to commemorate the accession of Queen Elizabeth II. As well as recording in narrative and photograph the events leading up to and including the coronation ceremonies, the library's copy (one of only 52) contains all the commemorative stamps issued to mark the new reign and all coins minted at the time for use in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Almost immediately the mayor, J. H. Luxford, made it known that a citizen who wished to remain anonymous, had offered to defray the cost of purchasing a copy for the library. The donor was later identified as H. G. St. V. Beechey, an Auckland businessman and city councillor (1947-50, 1959-67), who had given the city its mayoral mace in 1949.

A constant user of the central library in the late 1940s was an overseas scholar, Father Celsus Kelly O.F.M. He was engaged in research into Franciscan scholarship in the Middle Ages, and it was he who confirmed that more than half of the pre-1501 printings held in New Zealand were in the Grey and Shaw Collections. It was largely the result of Father Kelly's continuing interest in the library that led to the Government of Portugal in 1961 presenting it with a set of the publication *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica*.

This is a work in five large folio volumes published to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of Prince Henry the Navigator. It includes all the known Portuguese charts prior to the year 1600, together with a wide selection from the 17th century. In all there are more than 600 plates, of which 50 are in colour, representing some 1,600 specimens of early Portuguese map-making. The 700 pages of text are in Portuguese and English. The Auckland Public Library was the only municipal library in New Zealand to be presented with the set "in recognition of its high standing as a centre of learning and education".[136]

Finance was found twice in the decade to allow the library to acquire facsimile reproductions of two of the world's most famous and beautiful manuscripts. (As early

as 1911 it had bought a facsimile reproduction in two volumes of the earliest book printed from movable type, the *Bible*, produced by Gutenberg.)

For the sum of £130 ($260), the city became the owner in 1950 of a set of a limited edition of 400 facsimile reproductions of the eighth-century manuscript *Book of Kells.* Discovered in the ancient monastery at Kells in County Meath, Eire, this manuscript of the Gospels in Latin is considered to be the finest example in existence of the art of Celtic illumination. The original may be seen in Trinity College in Dublin. The facsimile edition is in three large volumes with 338 leaves of text and 84 pages of notes.

The original manuscript of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* is in the British Museum in London. Another superb example of the Celtic school of illumination, it is believed to have been written by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne (or Holy Island) off the coast of Northumberland before the year 700 A.D. For this large two-volume facsimile reproduction of 435 leaves of text and 295 pages of notes, the library paid £106 ($212) for one of the 680 sets issued in 1956.

Pressed for space though it was, the library managed in 1956 to mount a display entitled *Writing in Auckland* as part of the Auckland Festival of the Arts that year. In his introduction in the catalogue for the exhibition, Professor John Reid asked; "When an exhibition of the writing of the Auckland province is contemplated, then the first question to be answered is – what is an Auckland writer? Is he one born in Auckland, like Hugh Walpole, and writing neither in nor of this country? Or one like Allen Curnow or John Mulgan, born elsewhere, but for a time living and writing in the city? Or a through-traveller like Robin Hyde? It is clear that much of 'Auckland writing' is so only by the accident of its publication here. The attempt to apply rigid residential qualifications to writers is unrealistic in a community which is so fluid, and in whose literary members the migratory instinct is so highly developed. Nor can such a yard-stick as 'the capturing of a distinctively Auckland spirit' (whatever that may be) have any validity in a country in which much of the writing is still devoted to finding whether New Zealand itself has any distinctive spirit to capture." [137]

In the display there were books and manuscripts by Auckland-born (or, at least, Auckland-province born) writers like James Cowan, Jane Mander, Alan Mulgan, Hector Bolitho, Frank Sargeson, Roderick Finlayson, A. R. D. Fairburn, R. A. K. Mason, John Cowie Reid, Maurice Duggan, Keith Sinclair, Kendrick Smithyman and David Ballantyne; by others born elsewhere in New Zealand, but who lived and worked in Auckland, like J. A. S. Coppard (Taranaki), E. H. McCormick (Taihape), John Mulgan (Christchurch), Allen Curnow (Timaru), John Reece Cole (Palmerston North), Mary Stanley and O. E. Middleton (both Christchurch) and John A. Lee (Dunedin); and those who came to this country from overseas, but were to identify themselves as Aucklanders, like Sir George Grey (Lisbon-born), Sir John Logan Campbell (Edinburgh), William Satchell and M. K. Joseph (both from London), Robin Hyde (South Africa), Margaret Escott (England), Gloria Rawlinson (Tonga) and Eve

Langley from New South Wales and, who, like Finlayson, worked for a time in the book-bindery of the library.

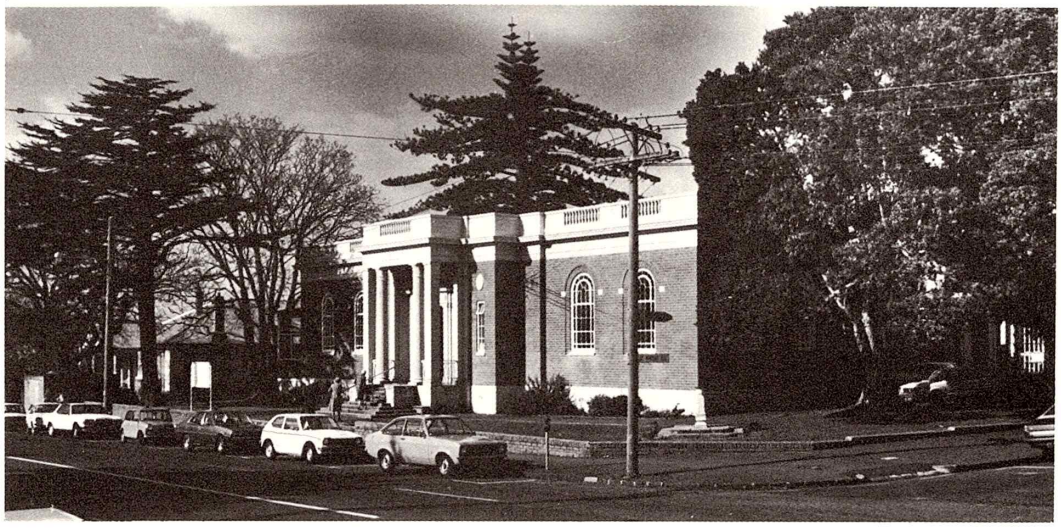
As an exhibition, *Writing in Auckland* was clearly incomplete. Space alone dictated how much could be included, as the exhibition's sub-title (*A Selection Over a Century*) shows. There were those who protested their own non-inclusion. And there were those who derided the inclusion of others. Out of it all came the donation, through his family, of William Satchell's manuscript of *The Greenstone Door* (published 1914) on 200 foolscap sheets in small copperplate on both sides of the paper; and the promise of the papers of John A. Lee, soldier, author, parliamentarian, controversialist and arguably this country's finest and most prolific pamphleteer.

As part of another festival of the arts, verse readings were sponsored by the library in the by-now derelict buildings on the site proposed for the new library. Judicious placing of chairs prevented listeners from falling through the rotted floorboards, and the hanging of bright-coloured pieces of cloth took the eyes off the nail-spattered walls of what had till recently been a showroom for electrical goods. In these incongruous surroundings, Allen Curnow, A. R. D. Fairburn, M. K. Joseph and others read to a crowded room selections from their own and other poets' works.

Users of the library's collections of music scores and literature had long pressed for a lending service of gramophone records of the kind that had been given by the Wellington Public Library since 1940. The answer had always been to wait till a new library could be built. Duthie decided in 1956 that it was a demand to be met sooner rather than later. The sum of £1,500 ($3,000) was set aside from the William Townsend Investment Trust for the initial purchase of long-playing records. The service, which comprised serious recorded music of all kinds, drama, poetry and language records was introduced early in the following year. A small hiring fee was charged for all records issued. To publicise the new service, a short series of recorded verse recitals was held in the Grey and Shaw room with local poets like Allen Curnow and M. K. Joseph introducing the readings.

Outdoor recorded recitals using the band rotunda as an operating base were also planned later in the year for the pleasure of city workers and students lunching or lazing in Albert Park. Unfortunately, unseasonable weather washed out the first three of the proposed weekly programmes. At the fourth attempt, the strains of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* (but with the nearby cannons in the park remaining silent), *Finlandia* by Sibelius, and Respighi's *The Birds* rang out across the park. Having been able to produce lunch-hour music only fitfully over two showery summers, a disappointed staff decided to move indoors for the occasional winter recorded recital in the art gallery.

By early 1959, the branch libraries at Remuera and St Heliers Bay were offering a lending service of art reproductions. The city art gallery had for several years been providing a limited hire service of about 100 reproductions for the board rooms of local business organizations. "But," said the gallery's director, Peter Tomory, "our job is to



Remuera branch library, a prize-winning design opened 1926. Auckland Public Library

conserve art, not hire it. Anyway, we have neither the space nor the staff for such a service." [138] For that matter, neither had the overcrowded nor understaffed library. It still managed by September 1960, however, to have central library and all eight branches lending, to the public and schools for a small fee, reproductions ranging from the old masters to the moderns.

Most would-be hirers knew what they wanted, and not surprisingly it was the post-impressionists who were most favoured for home-hanging. Yet, staff at one branch remembered the small boy who arrived agitated at closing time and apparently unable to make his selection from the range of framed reproductions. Did he want a portrait, they asked. Or perhaps a landscape? "It doesn't really matter," was the reply, "Mum says it's got to be big enough to cover the hole I accidentally knocked in the gib board behind my bed-head!" They issued him John Constable's long and narrow *Wivenhoe Park*, .48m x .9m.

28

CHANGES AT GRAFTON AND GLEN INNES

GRAFTON, the first of the branches, had opened in 1913. In 1954 it survived a suggestion in open council meeting that it be one of the first to be shut down in the name of economy, but the greatest threat to its continued existence came in 1960.

Nine years earlier Grafton had reached its peak membership of 2,230, with annual issues totalling some 91,424. By 1960 the membership was down by 25% and issues by 13%, at a time when considerable increases were being chalked up at all other branches.

Asked to report on the future of Grafton because of its small membership (1,633 in March 1960) and the cost of running the branch, Duthie had little choice in July 1960 but to recommend its closure. He reminded the council of the offer he had made to provide a library service on a contractual basis to the adjacent boroughs of Mt Albert, Mt Eden and Mt Roskill. Acceptance would have given their residents the same library privileges as city residents, not only at Grafton but also at central and the remaining branch libraries. All three boroughs had declined the offer. The only alternative to closing Grafton would be a restricted service with a reduced bookstock and staff.

The reasons for Grafton's comparative lack of patronage were obvious enough. As homeowners moved out to newer suburbs, light industry had taken over. Even more important from the city council's point of view was the fact that the branch lay so close to the boundaries of three financially non-contributing boroughs. Of Grafton's membership, 18% of adults and 49% of children lived outside the area controlled by the city council.

Led by Harold P. Burton, a prominent Auckland baker, a long-term resident of the Grafton area and a former city councillor (1929-1947), a group of concerned citizens was quickly formed. It asked the council not to close the branch until at the earliest March 1961. That would give them time to try to increase membership to the point (reckoned at between 2,500 and 3,000) to justify keeping Grafton open. The council gave the group only till October 1960 to indicate a satisfactory level of support. Otherwise the library would shut down within the month.

Burton and his group did well. The petition they circulated was signed by 1,244 people, although only 335 of the signatories were electors of Auckland city. Nor were children allowed to sign – even if a letter to the city librarian by one concerned youngster made it clear just who would suffer most from the lack of a library in the area.

"Why do you have to shut the Grafton library? When it is shut everyone will have to go to Auckland Central and my mother won't allow me to. There are four children in our family and we will miss it very much, as we all like reading and find it very useful for books that help us at school."[139]

The city council considered that the petitioners had proved the need to continue library service in the area, although not at the level of other, busier branches. It adopted Duthie's recommendation that a restricted service be given from one room only at the branch for 28 hours a week (against the more usual 38), that a staff of only two be employed, and that the bookstock be reduced from some 18,000 to about 7,000. The titles to be removed from the shelves of Grafton could be better used elsewhere in the system. As basic stock, for example, at the proposed new Glen Innes building, or to supplement stock at Remuera and St Heliers Bay, where issues were very high in relation to the size of their collections. Restricted service from Grafton would operate from April 1961 and be reviewed after a year.

A check made in April 1962 showed membership of the branch to have fallen by a further 7.5%. By the end of the following year it had rallied to reach a figure of some 2,000, representing an increase of about 14% over the 1961 return. Grafton thus continued to operate a restricted service and to be spared for another 17 years the ordeal of justifying its existence.

Save for the south-western suburb of Blockhouse Bay, Glen Innes was one of the last areas of any size in Auckland city not extensively built over by the late 1950s. Until after the Second World War endless rows of market gardens occupied the rich, volcanic loam formed from the eruption more than 30,000 years ago of Mt Wellington (the "Maungarei" or "Hill of the Ever-Watchful" of the Maoris). Today it is a scatter of factories and the playing fields of the university – even though that university is ten kilometres away in the city. And where the sprawl of state-constructed cottages chokes the flatland between the railway line and the Tamaki River, men not so long ago hunted rabbit and hare and, in season, pheasant and duck.

The original Glen Innes estate was acquired piecemeal over the space of 20 years by William Innes Taylor. A son of the General William Taylor of the Indian army, and a brother of the better-known Allan Kerr-Taylor of Mt Albert, William Innes Taylor named the land he bought not only after himself, but also after his mother, whose maiden name was Barbara Innes.

Robert Duthie had raised the matter of a site for a branch library at Glen Innes in his first year of office in 1953. Four years later the council resolved to include a library in the community centre it was planning for the district. It was spurred in its resolution by the report of the city librarian that "with the exception of a new central library, no other library is so urgently needed in Auckland."[140]

Unfortunately, a poll of ratepayers taken in November 1960 narrowly put paid to the proposal to raise a loan to build the centre. With many of the district's 16,000 residents

still pressing for library service, it was clearly time for Duthie and his officers to make their move. The mobile library could give little more than token service seven and a half hours each week, drawing on a bookstock of little more than one thousand.

By arrangement with the board of governors of Tamaki College in Elstree Avenue, an unused classroom was rented as a branch library and opened on 30 May 1959. Operating only from late-afternoon till early evening Monday to Friday, and with a bookstock of only some 4,000 (many of them transferred from Grafton branch), the classroom library could, like the mobile, provide little more than token service. As a library it was too far from the busy shopping complex, and its hours of opening were inconvenient for many would-be patrons.

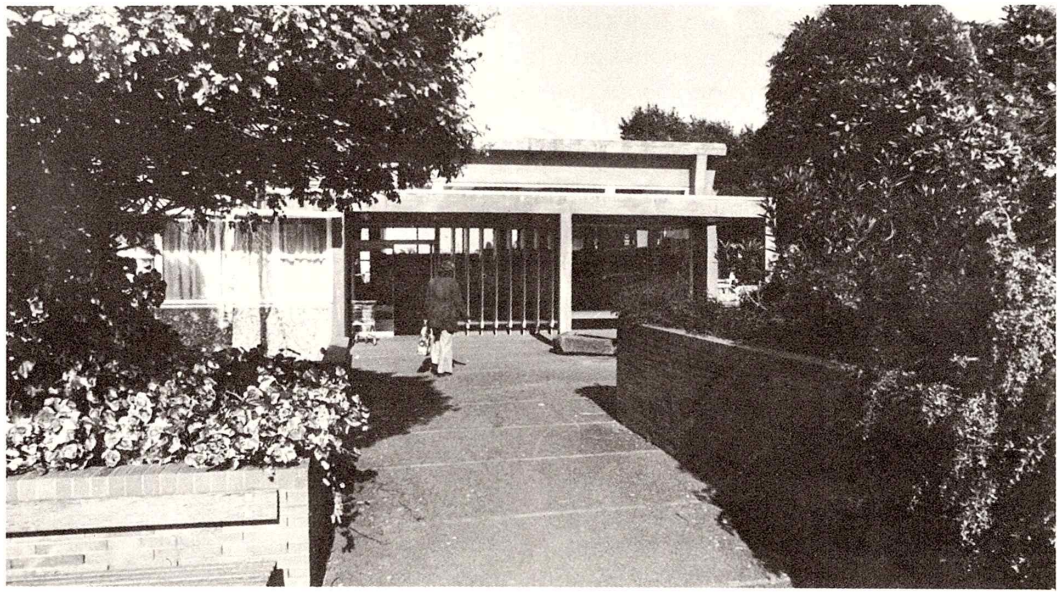
By August 1961, the principal of the college, J. D. Murdoch, indicated that he would need Room 8 as a classroom in the following school year. Like the librarians, he regretted that more adults had not made use of the facility. And that many people, hearing that the branch was located in a school, inevitably thought of it as a library for children. Unlike the librarians, he had found younger, primary-school-age children something of a nuisance wandering in the corridors of the college at odd hours. Privately, the library assistants reckoned that any high-jinks in the passage-ways had more to do with the ease with which the college's coin-operated Coca-Cola dispensing machine outside Room 8 could be manipulated to produce the beverage free, than with any lack of control exercised inside the library.

The staff of the branch – and obviously Duthie himself – could only agree with the principal that the city council could have been doing something in the meantime about the erection of a permanent branch building. The council did, in fact, lodge an application with the Local Authorities Loans Board in Wellington in October 1961 for permission to raise a loan of £54,800 ($109,600) for a library in Glen Innes. Were it to be granted, the council planned to begin construction in the 1963-64 financial year.

Suddenly it seemed that the disappointing chronicle of attempts to build a new central library was to be repeated in Glen Innes. In May 1962 the loans board deferred the city council's application to raise a loan for the branch and asked for more information. Two months later, and because the council's own budgetary committee had resolved to delay building until the financial year of 1965-66, the loans board decided to make no decision for a further 12 months.

The classroom library was closed on 1 December 1961, after 18 months of operation. It re-opened a week later in shop premises not much larger but better located in the shopping precinct of Mayfair Place.

It took under a year and a half to show that the small, congested shop was totally inadequate as a library. By then there were upwards of 20,000 people living in the Glen Innes district. And, although membership of the branch was only some 3,400, weekly issues had topped 3,000 and more than 100 new members were being signed up each month. Another move was imperative.



Glen Innes branch library opened in 1966, the first library to be built in the city in 40 years.
Auckland Public Library

This time it would be to a new building under construction in Taniwha Street, just around the corner towards the railway line. Its 2,400 square feet (223 square metres) of ground floor space would have to suffice for the three years likely to elapse before a permanent branch library could be erected. What had been offered in August 1963 as street level space, overnight changed to first floor accommodation when the owner decided to take over the ground floor himself as a discount grocery. Opposed as he was – and as he knew most users of the library would be to a "walk-up" library – Duthie saw no alternative to renting the upstairs area for two years.

Relief came none too soon. In 1963 the loans board authorised the raising of the money needed to build the branch, and the council responded by advancing its priority.

Designed by the city council's architects under T. K. Donner, the Glen Innes branch was the first library to be erected in Auckland city in 40 years. Open-planned and handsome in a severely-functional way, with the bulk of its bookstock shelved around its walls and naturally well-lit by clerestory, it was opened by the mayor, Dr R.G. McElroy, on 17 March 1966.

Borrowers long accustomed to the limited selection of books in the temporary school and shop libraries, revelled in the choice of holiday reading. In the field of fiction, there were novels as recent and popular as Mary McCarthy's *The Group*, John le Carré's *The Looking-Glass War*, James Baldwin's *Another Country* and Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*. If they wanted something weightier, they would find among many, titles like

Honest to God by John Robinson, Theodore H. White's *The Making of the President* and Hugh Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War.*

Unlike Remuera, which had been the last branch built, this one in Line Road was to have an ornamental pool at its front door. Unfortunately, the all-too-frequent falling into it of small children and blown pieces of paper led to its being filled in with pebble and stone three years later.

In 1964 the population of Auckland passed the half-million mark. More than 25,000 people of the Maori race already lived in the city, and with the steadily-increasing influx of arrivals from the islands of the south Pacific, Auckland was being spoken of as the capital of urban Polynesia. As home to one-fifth of the country's population, the city spread over an area bigger than that of any other of 500,000 in the world. Nearly half of the nation's industry was located within 20 kilometres of the port. With one car to every four citizens, some 115,000 vehicles rolled daily into the city on a fast-expanding system of motorways. Comparatively few workers commuted by train, yet after only five years of operation, the four-lane harbour bridge was carrying the volume of traffic once predicted for the mid-1970s. Petrol-driven, diesel-powered and electric-trolley buses clogged the inner streets.

In Queen Street pedestrians blocked pavements to watch black and white television images flickering in the windows of home appliance stores; gazed up at Auckland's first curtain-wall, air-conditioned office block, the AMP on the corner of Victoria Street East; or were drawn to explore Kerridge-Odeon's No 246, the earliest of the open-planned merchandising complexes to recognise that shops do not need windows for light (a lesson that libraries had yet to learn).

From 1965, when the international airport at Mangere opened, thousands of visitors from overseas would join the thousands more coming by sea in cruise liners like the *Oriana* and the *Canberra.* By bus they would go to marvel at the magnificent stands of kauri in the Waitakere Ranges. By hydrofoil and steam ferry they would sail among the attractive islands of the Hauraki Gulf. And on foot they would find their way to the Auckland Domain to admire the unique contents of the Maori Court in the classically-beautiful War Memorial Museum.

But if by some chance their stroll in the city took them into the overcrowded, dilapidated old library on the edge of Albert Park, it would be to find that the treasures given by Grey, the Shaws and others were in storage, almost all unavailable for viewing.

The council's order of priorities for the sixties had been carried out. Near the town hall, the multi-storey city administration building was open by 1966. Bookings were hard to come by for the Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Memorial Hall in High Street. Four municipal car-parking buildings were scattered about the city. Observing it all, Robert Duthie knew that the new library and the new services he had in mind for the business and commercial sector of a city of half a million were unlikely to be realised until a new decade.

29

BUILDING PAINS

DESPITE THE DAMNING REPORTS of both the city librarian and the city engineer in 1953, the matter of replacing the old library building was allowed to drift for a further four years.

Late in 1957 there was a brief flutter of indecision. In November the town clerk, F. J. Gwilliam, placed a report before the council recommending an alternative site for a new library. It lay just south of the town hall on land previously occupied by an amusement park. It was quickly found to be unsuitable. Not only was it too small, it was also too far removed from the busier parts of the city. Later it would become an open-air carpark and finally be incorporated in the link of Mayoral Drive joining Greys Avenue and Queen Street. Anyway, the council had made it clear only a matter of months before that it did not have the finance to build a library, wherever the site.

It did, however, decide to acquire space elsewhere in town to hold some of the staff and stock now threatening to overflow the Wellesley Street East building. Duthie reported adversely on the suggestion to occupy the nearby rabbit-warren that had been the premises of Turnbull and Jones, and the adjacent plumbers' supplies merchant, George McCaul.

He could have been spared making that report. A couple of months later the council was being told by its technical advisers that the site "may now be required for use as a bus-loading area . . . trucking depot or a parking building." The latter proposal appealed to the city engineer, since a parking building would provide space for upwards of 540 vehicles. In addition, it would allow for a string of revenue-producing shops at street level.

By October 1957 councillors were changing tack yet again. For the sum of £127,000 ($254,000) they resolved to excavate and build over the grassed area between the reference department and the rear of the city art gallery on the Albert Park side.

That would add almost 3,700 square metres of extra space for the library, spread over an area of four floors. They realised, they said, that a new library would be required within ten to fifteen years. And they argued that the extensions they envisaged could be needed by that time for an enlarged art gallery, and so would not be wasted. It was another proposal that was to come to nought.

In July 1958 the Local Authorities Loans Board — a government-appointed group set

up to oversee major expenditure at local body level – refused to sanction the raising of the loan for the extra space.

Out from the filing cabinets and back on the drawing-boards of the city council architects went the scheme for the new library to be erected in three stages, on the site owned by the council and just opposite the old building.

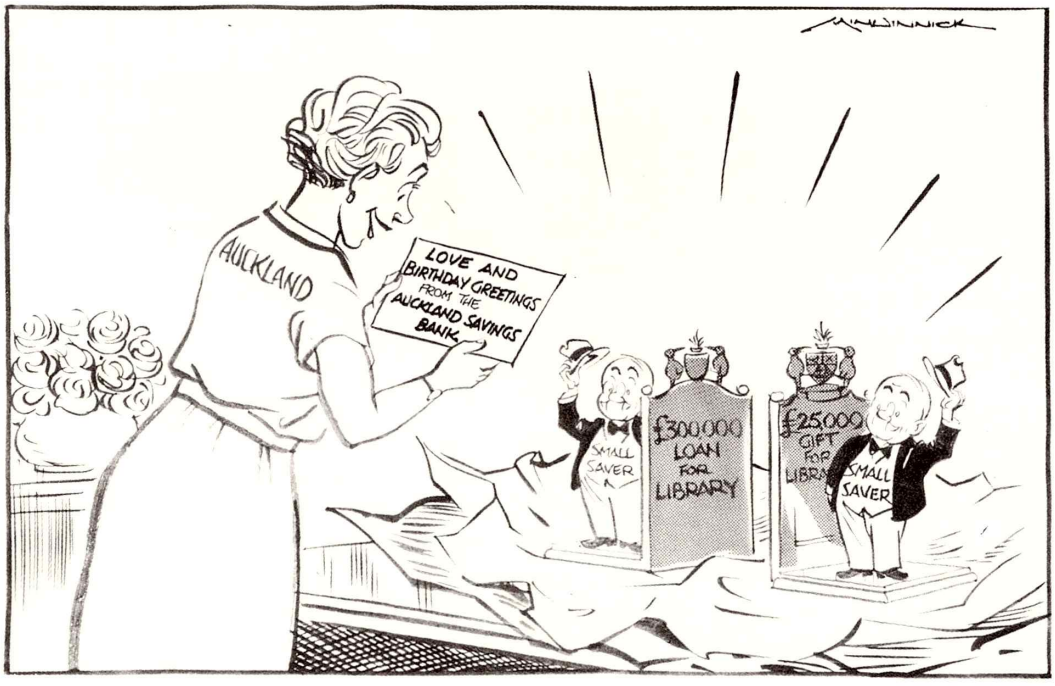
With space at central now critical, back also to the organizations which had deposited them with the library, had to go the collections of the New Zealand Institute of Valuers, and the Chartered Institute of Secretaries. To Grafton branch went the collections of the Goethe Society, the French Club and those of the Dutch Club and the Netherlands Red Cross. More ominously, the next major move from central would be of staff as well as of stock.

Even so, prospects for the new library in late 1959 seemed brighter than at any time before. In October the council approved the construction of the first stage of the proposed three-stage development, and of an application to the loans board for permission to raise £300,000 ($600,000). The board gave its approval in June 1960. The first stage would provide 42,000 square feet (3,900 square metres), the second another 84,000 (7,800), and the third and final stage – not to be started until after the lease of the Embassy cinema on the corner of Lorne Street and Wellesley Street East expired in 1974 – a further 43,000 square feet (4,000 square metres). At the same time, authority was given for the demolition of the remaining buildings on the site as they became vacant.

In July 1961, Robert Duthie stressed to the council the gravity of the situation at the central library. Eighteen months had passed since he had reported that before a new book could be added to the shelves of the reference department, an older one had to be removed to either the attics or to the stacks. With a net annual increase of 4,000 reference volumes alone needing 122 metres (400 feet) of extra shelving, service would inevitably suffer unless relief were given. He asked for assurance that the new library would retain its place at the head of the council's list of building priorities, ahead of an administration building, car-parking buildings and the Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Memorial Hall. (The final paragraph of the previous chapter has already shown that he asked in vain.)

The council's Parks and Library Committee in August 1961 recommended the raising of the loan of £300,000 ($600,000) which had been approved the year before by the loans board. This the council agreed to do in October 1961. It also instructed its architects to complete plans as quickly as possible.

Again, it was all to no avail. By August 1961 Duthie had every reason to feel that he was being let down by both the bureaucrats in Wellington and by his own bosses in the town hall. Not only had the loans board knocked back the application to raise the money wanted to build the branch at Glen Innes, the council's budgetary control committee had deferred construction of the branch for at least four years. In the same month the council had refused to confirm the priority of the new central library on its



"When fortune's fickle, the faithful friend is found," so wrote the Latin poet Ennius, 239-169 B.C.
Minhinnick in the *New Zealand Herald*

schedule of planned capital works. Three months later, in November 1962, it resolved to delay starting construction of it until the 1966-67 financial year.

Spirits were to rise once more in the first month of the new year. The good news was broken by the *Herald* on 30 January 1963 in an editorial which began; "The Auckland Savings Bank has again offered its generosity to the community in a spirit of imagination which amounts to inspiration." [141]

In the same issue, its cartoonist, the incomparable Gordon (later Sir Gordon) Minhinnick, expressed the thanks of Aucklanders at large and of the city councillors in particular. With hat raised in salute, "Min's" familiar "John Citizen" (identified on this occasion as "Small Saver") supports a city-crested book-end captioned "£300,000 loan for library". His double stands proudly against a matching book-end marked "£25,000 gift for library". From an accompanying card, a delighted "Auckland" reads "Love and birthday greetings from the Auckland Savings Bank".

For a financially-embarrassed council, the loan (for 25 years at five and three-eighths per cent interest) must have seemed as manna from heaven. The bank's gift to commemorate the forthcoming visit of Queen Elizabeth II, would enable the city librarian to initiate the long-planned reference service for commerce, science and technology.

In a moment of euphoria, Arthur Dickson, the city engineer, assured the bank's trustees that "the first stage should be ready in two and a half years".[142] Within a matter of weeks, Robert Duthie and the deputy city architect, Ewen M. Wainscott, were sent to the United States of America, Great Britain and Scandinavia to study the latest developments in library planning, construction and administration. On their return, detailed planning began for Stage I of the proposed three-stage development of the triangular site.

First there was legislation to be tidied up as far as the land itself was concerned. Once part of a military reserve, it was held under the Auckland Improvement (Albert Park Barracks) Act of 1872. It formed part of a trust, the income from which could be used only for educational purposes, improvements to Albert Park, or the promotion of the arts or the sciences in the city.

In April 1964, the city council decided to buy the freehold of the site from the Improvement Trust. In effect, it was no more than a book entry. The council had itself assumed the responsibilities and duties of the Improvement Commissioners as early as 1879.

By mid-1964 it had been resolved to incorporate Stage 2 of the scheme (involving tenancies in Lorne Street) with Stage 1, leaving the area of the Embassy cinema for development in the 1970s.

The month of September 1964 saw the council indulging in the inevitable round of second thoughts. Could there not be shops along the frontage, and car-parking underground? It was a suggestion soon slammed by the *New Zealand Herald*. "Something is wrong if Auckland cannot build and support a library without . . . installing a row of shops along the ground floor."[143] And, from a councillor: "Should car parks costing on an average of £1.5 million have priority over the library?" "Yes," was the reply from Mayor Robinson, "without a doubt!"[144] Which led to a *Herald* cartoon of "Robbie" in a parking lot and the foundation stone for the Auckland Public Library gathering grass in the middle of the yard.

At the eleventh hour someone in council suggested that Auckland did not really need a metropolitan library at all – a city one would be enough. It was a thought that did not get far in 1964, but it would be heard again more widely some 15 years later.

The note of frustration sounded by the *Herald* was probably just what was needed by the city council. "The new central library has been delayed too long. The project should be passed to the Auckland Regional Authority and undertaken by it as a work of top priority."[145]

Suddenly the finance committee of the council was in favour of raising the money needed for the project. In November 1964 the council resolved that the proposed library be built to serve the metropolitan area.

Just as plans were beginning to look final, heads went down once more to prepare yet another set – the fourth. Early 1965 brought the news that a proposal by the regional

planning authority for road widening would slice off no less than a third of the projected library site at its apex of Rutland Street and Wellesley Street East.

With the future building now a shade truncated at its eastern extremity, the council was at last ready to go to the loans board in Wellington for approval to raise the sum of £793,000 ($1,586,000) for the first stage of development. The board gave its approval in August 1965. Hopes were as high as ever they had been. The long-awaited replacement for the 78-year-old library had never seemed closer.

Enter in the mid-1960s Nemesis in the form of the faceless civil servant. "To promote," as the government announced, "stability in the building industry, and to ensure that sufficient resources were available to devote to essential housing," [146] it introduced a programme of building control. Heading the Building Control Advisory Committee was a "building programmer".

The decision of the programmer in late November 1965 was that construction of the new library could not begin for a further three years. He found it very difficult, he said, to establish priorities. "We do not have a snitcher on libraries as such. A library is an amenity, and we have decided that production factories, university buildings, schools, hospitals and other buildings must have priority." [147] (Such comment could only leave librarians – most of whom would consider that they were providing an educational service rather than a "pleasantness of place" – wondering what lower priority there could be than a library's.)

Public reaction was immediate. To the leader writer of the *Herald*, the decision "looked like a bureaucratic attempt at sick humour ... Three months ago the Local Authorities Loans Board authorised the raising of a substantial loan for Stage I. Virtually the same government departments comprise both the committee and the board. It may be farcical, but it is scarcely funny." [148]

Critic and scholar Eric H. McCormick spoke for many in his letter to the *Star*. "Anyone, who, like myself, makes extensive use of the present library, realises under what crippling handicaps the staff now works. Despite this, Mr Duthie and his assistants have developed what is among the best library services in the country, if not the best." [149]

Pressed by the city councillors, the Minister of Works in the National Government, P. B. Allen, promised to examine the decision of the building programmer. Within the week he upheld the decision to delay construction. Invited to inspect the central library personally, he did so in late January 1966. In a matter of days his answer came back. It was still "No". Building plans at the University of Auckland had to take precedence over the proposed central library. Ironically, the top priority of the university was its library. And, having eased his frame around staff working in crowded nooks and crannies, and picked his path over floors in the stacks and attics piled high with bound volumes of newspapers, books, periodicals and documents of all kinds, the minister was moved to comment that the position was bad – "but not so bad as the press had made out!" [150]

To the city council, Allen offered one crumb of consolation. He would reconsider the

matter in another year's time, when the 12-month return application came up for review.

Perhaps the Minister of Works leaned a little on the building programmer towards the end of 1966. Whatever the reason – and co-incidental almost with the registration of the first half-million television sets in New Zealand – came good news for the city council. Approval had been given in Wellington for an immediate start on the new library. Equally welcome was the announcement that the trustees of the Auckland Savings Bank had agreed to underwrite a library loan to the limit of $1,000,000 (decimal currency had been adopted in New Zealand from July 1967). The latest loan would be over and above the one for £300,000 ($600,000) made available by the bank in 1963. With the contract awarded to the Australia-based company of James Wallace Limited (which had built the city administration block, completed in 1966), earth-moving equipment moved on to the site in December 1967.

The library that James Wallace would erect would comprise six floors, two of them below ground and four above, and each of approximately 1580 square metres (17,000 square feet). The site posed problems. There was a difference of 9 metres (30 feet) in levels between its base in Lorne Street where the entrance would be and its apex; and the "island" on which it would stand allowed little scope for landscaping.

On the other hand its advantages were many. It was ideally located in the educational, cultural and business heart of the city. Close by were the university and the technical institute, the art gallery, the majority of the cinemas, the town hall, the municipal offices and numerous government departments. The site was a mere stone's throw from the civic centre to be developed as open space above an underground car-park to hold upwards of 1,000 vehicles. Fittingly, the library's nearest neighbour would be its friend in time of greatest need, the Auckland Savings Bank.

The library was to be the first in either Australia or New Zealand to break away from the traditional municipal library pattern of reference and lending departments, in favour of re-arranging the bookstock into broad subject fields.

For both librarian and architect in 1963 it was imperative that Stage I, making up three-fifths of the ultimate scheme, function efficiently as a library without any compromise. The total plan was not scheduled for completion until 1980 at the earliest.

And for Ewen Wainscott, in particular, the proposed delay between stages of construction meant the need to maintain both aesthetic and structural continuity. Hence his choice of exterior cladding in white Carrara marble, and internal finish in honed Travertine marble selected for durability, weathering and matching qualities and, most importantly, availability. Neither Duthie nor Wainscott (who became the city architect in 1968) was to know just how many years were to pass before the library would begin to take on the look of a completed building.

The triangle of land that was to house the new library, had been well-known to Aucklanders for over a century. In the days of horse-drawn trams in the 1880s William

Crowther, and after him, Pullan and Armitage, had their livery stables on the Lorne Street corner of Wellesley Street. The premises which the electrical merchants, Turnbull and Jones, occupied for more than 40 years from 1921 had, as early as 1885, been the headquarters of the Direct Supply Company, a hostel for the YWCA (1905-08), and a soldiers' annexe (1918-20) for the nearby Rutland Street drill hall. For many years the area had been the address of George McCaul's plumbing, tank and oven factory and, for lesser periods, of Buchanan the monumental mason, the Auckland Technical School Association, Spragg's garage, and the studio of Anton Teutenberg, the Prussian stone-mason who carved the effigies that adorn the Auckland Supreme Courthouse. In the days of the great depression of the 1930s, a doss-house stood on the corner where the livery stables had been. The Embassy theatre was erected on the site in 1936. Probably not a few of the doss-house regulars crossed the road occasionally in emulation of the hero in *The Great Gatsby*, who observed somewhere that "he had been drunk for about a week and thought it might sober him up to sit in a library." [151] More of them, having queued for the allocation of a bed for the night, went in search of the warmth from the radiators in the reference department until closing time at 10 p.m.

It was in March 1968 that vibrations set up by pile-driving for the new library caused sections of the cornice in the plaster ceiling of the old one to drop off. Fortunately, they fell only so far as the gallery of the reference department. All the same, it set staff recalling the lines of Robert Frost about how many apples "fell on Newton's head before he took the hint!" [152] They remembered when 12,000 volumes were removed from the over-loaded gallery in 1961, and how simple it was for a book being eased out of the high, crowded shelves, to plummet to the floor of the reference department. The danger to readers at the four long centre tables caused the wise ones to take the same hint as Newton and seek shelter – if they could find space – in one of the bays beneath the protective overhang of the gallery.

Winter came early and violently to New Zealand in 1968. An April storm overturned the inter-island ferry *Wahine* in Wellington harbour, with the loss of 51 lives. The edge of the storm sent tonnes of clay and the side of Leighton's driving school cascading into the site of the new Auckland library. The school, left hanging on the edge of a ten metre drop, and the adjacent petrol station with underground supply tanks, were demolished within a matter of days.

By July 1968 work had slipped back nine weeks as men struggled in mid-winter mud to replace the sheet piling that had come down with the April rains, and six pumps worked day and night to try to keep the ever-increasing water at bay. Christmas 1969 saw the contractor forecasting a delayed finish of the job in October of the following year. Again the rains came in July 1970. Two and a half years had now passed since work began. Still the gumbooted workmen were sloshing about in the city's biggest, wettest hole, with 30 of them soon to go on strike for a week till they were issued with the waders they wanted. On 25 March 1971 Mayor Robinson (now Sir Dove-Myer) was

heard to comment that "the whole new city library project has been dogged by bad luck since it began." [153] Anxious to quit their almost unworkable quarters in the old building, senior library staff could report having felt pretty much that way for the last 20 years.

Finally, though, the new library, which in terms of the original contract of 1967, had been due for completion in June 1970, was handed over to the city council by the contractors on 2 September 1971. Now would begin for Duthie and his staff the rush to fill the new from the old in time to be in business by the end of the year.

The 1960s was the decade in which both staff and stock from the central library were to "go walkabout" – twice in some instances.

In 1960 the children's department quit the room off the entrance to the reference department for the one housing the Grey and Shaw Collections overlooking Kitchener Street. For the next ten years, young readers would use the entry to the art gallery to reach their books and magazines. The precious manuscripts and early printings would go into storage and could be viewed only by prior arrangement. Into the room with the three stained-glass windows would be squeezed the contents of the New Zealand department; for its patrons the once-admired suffused natural lighting was acceptable on only the sunniest of days.

By August 1962, upwards of a couple of dozen behind-the-scenes library staff (cataloguers, clerks and typists in the main) had joined the 12,000 or so volumes removed for reasons of safety from the gallery of the reference department, in a disused warehouse in Cook Street. The premises had earlier been occupied by the seed merchants, O'Leary Brothers and Downs, and more recently by a firm of tea packers. When it rained, rivulets of tea leaves working their way down from an upstairs floor would mingle with fugitive traces of blood and bone to produce an aroma of a kind not normally associated with library routines.

August 1965 saw the library's "lost tribe" on the move again. The Cook Street premises were to be demolished as part of the beautification of the area surrounding the new city administration complex, due for opening on 28 October 1966. For the next six years, the address of the wanderers would be Queen Street, just up the road from the town hall, in a building that once belonged to the motor-trade firm of E. W. Pidgeon, and latterly had been the headquarters of the city's traffic department. And, for quite a few of those six years, library staff would be confronted by irate motorists seeking exemption from offences reported by law-enforcement officers long since departed for the comparative safety of the administration building.

With annual issues in 1959 fast approaching the two million mark, it was clearly time to replace the 80-year-old system of manual issue and return of books. The successor to what was known as the "Brown" system (after J. D. Brown of *Manual for Librarians* fame) was a combined camera and pre-punched transaction card system. The first of its kind in New Zealand, it was introduced at central library, the branches and the mobile library in September 1963. The camera, registered as Libramatic, was the inven-

tion of Iain MacLaren. A man of many talents, MacLaren had joined the staff of the city council as a draughtsman, become its official photographer and, more recently, the library's photographer and display officer. The system he devised served the library splendidly for more than 16 years.

The autumn of 1969 brought a flashback to the year of 1885. On the northern flank of the library and art gallery building, what had been the newspaper and adjacent rooms were being torn down for the erection of the new Edmiston wing of the gallery. During excavations, the contractor reported unearthing a sealed, glass-lined leaden vessel, "built rather like a vacuum flask"; it had been locked in a niche between two heavy blocks of bluestone, fastened with iron clamps and buried about two feet deep. He had hit upon the time capsule put there 84 years earlier by Mayor Waddel at the foundation-stone laying ceremony for the library and the art gallery.

Water had apparently entered the container, and copies of the *New Zealand Herald* and the *Evening Star* of 4 June 1885 had almost disintegrated. The vellum scroll which listed the dignitaries present on the occasion was in "reasonable" condition.

Of the coins of the realm, "as being every denomination of coin from a 1/2d to a sovereign," the only ones said to remain were one half-penny, one penny, one three-pence, one sixpence and a florin. Of gold coins, the workman reported that he had seen no sign.

One day after the newspaper room was shut down on 11 August 1968, it re-opened in more spacious, but considerably less convenient quarters on the Greys Avenue level of the town hall. It would remain there for at least eight years and would make yet another move to temporary accommodation before returning to become part of the library.

30

SERVICE TO INDUSTRY

THE DELEGATE from Wellington who told a senior management conference in Auckland in August 1953 that the commerce section of the Auckland Public Library was "shocking" was, of course, right. No one was more aware of that than the incoming city librarian, Robert Duthie. However, the answer did not lie in appealing to the city's businessmen to give money for more books, as the delegate suggested. Informational material is, of itself, not enough. It must be exploited by qualified and

experienced staff. Duthie knew that a satisfactory service of the type he had in mind could not be provided until an overcrowded central library was enlarged or replaced. Obviously there was need to do something urgently.

The problem was not a new one. Edward Shillington had written off to Hong Kong back in 1898 to try to get "useful material for the Auckland commercial community". There is no record of the result of that approach. Then there had been John Barr's unsuccessful plea to the Chamber of Commerce in 1919 to lodge its library under his control in the reference department.

In 1937, after the great depression, the subject again surfaced briefly. "A revival of trade and business," Barr reported, "is reflected in a greater use of the books and periodicals dealing with the useful art of commerce." [154]

After the war, the library committee of the city council considered a proposal to found a technological library in Auckland as a memorial for past students of the city who had died on active service. The idea was admirable. What was odd was that its proposed location was Seddon Memorial Technical College (now the Auckland Technical Institute) only a short distance from the central library. Nothing came of that either.

So much else occupied Duthie in the settling-in years as city librarian, that it was 1957 before he could give the matter of an improved service to business and industry detailed consideration. He reported to the council in that year that "so much emphasis is placed on cultural and educational aspects of public library material, that the practical side of the library's purpose (commercial material) is apt to be overlooked." [155] He submitted, and had approved by the library committee, a list of directories and quick reference material for a commercial and technical section. Once bought, these were publicised throughout the membership of the Chamber of Commerce, the Employers' and the Manufacturers' Associations.

The gift of £25,000 ($50,000) from the Auckland Savings Bank in 1963 for the "furnishing and stocking of a hall of commercial, scientific and technical subjects," allowed for the planning and forward buying of the kind of material that an expanded commercial and business collection would require. In 1963 the city council agreed in principle to establish a co-operative information centre in conjunction with the proposed new department. So was conceived ACTIS (Auckland Commercial and Technical Information Service), an organisation to provide specialist information service for industry.

The idea for ACTIS had grown out of a symposium for information for industry sponsored the previous year by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and held in the Auckland Technical Institute. It had been attended by some 250 representatives of industry and commerce, government departments, special and public libraries, and research organisations.

Robert Duthie had told the symposium that no other section of the library's activities

was more urgently in need of intensive and large-scale development, or had more potential value to the community.

A working party was formed to plan the setting up of a comprehensive information service for industry in the Auckland area, to be based on the new central library. In 1968, the estimated annual cost of such a co-operative enterprise was about $40,000. This sum was to be raised by membership fees from industry, and by the Auckland City Council's agreeing to pay for the first two years the salary of an information resources officer, who would liaise with industry. He was Raymond S. Ashcroft, an English-born industrial chemist with a bachelor's degree in science. Ray Ashcroft joined the staff of the library in November 1969, and the proposed two years of his employment were to extend to five before ACTIS became part of a New Zealand-wide operation controlled at the national level in Wellington.

The scheme was an immediate success. Within a year of the new library's opening in November 1971, 116 firms had enrolled as ACTIS members, 2,652 questions had been answered, 1,204 items had been requested through library inter-loan, and no fewer than 144 inter-loan requests for information had been placed with libraries overseas.

In July 1974 the Auckland City Council formally agreed to collaborate with the National Library in establishing a regional centre of SATIS (Scientific and Technical Information Service) in Auckland. The council undertook to maintain the central library's commerce, science and technology department at least at its existing standard in terms of staff and bookstock, and to allow it to work closely with the regional centre of SATIS. In addition, the council agreed to provide SATIS service to users beyond the boundaries of Auckland city. Finally, there was an undertaking to accommodate the regional centre for Auckland in the central library, and to provide supporting staff and general services. The total scheme became operative in 1975, with the government accepting responsibility for ACTIS as the first of the regional centres of SATIS.

In 1980 SATIS operates as a specialised information service for manufacturers and businessmen throughout New Zealand. It is based on the established library network, and needs the combined resources of New Zealand to function efficiently.

In addition to the regional centre set up in Auckland in 1974, there are centres in Christchurch (established 1977) and Wellington (1978). Each centre is staffed by an information resources officer and by at least one qualified and trained librarian (the establishment in Auckland allows for two librarians).

In essence, an information resources officer is the link between industry and the library. It is his or her task to bridge whatever communication gap there may be, establish contact between the person with the problem and the person best able to solve it. Evaluation and follow-up of information that has been supplied are vital aspects of the work of the information resources officer. An IRO must be *active*, moving out from the library to meet and discuss problems rather than waiting for industry to get in touch with the library. Often an IRO has to persuade industry that it needs information, that

the library can help from its own stock or, through library inter-loan, from the stock of libraries elsewhere in the country or overseas. For the success of a service like SATIS, an information resources officer must practise effective public relations and be able to catch and hold the confidence of industry. To do that, he or she must be able to talk the language of industry, and be knowledgeable in a general way about the kind of work being carried out by any particular client.

SATIS centres receive financial aid from the central government for staff, administration and resources. In every case, however, the expenditure of the local authority on its own library's commercial and technical stock far outweighs the government's contribution.

The three centres have tended to develop differently, if only because each has different needs and differing resources. In Auckland, ACTIS numbers several of the country's largest organisations as members, whereas the Wellington and Christchurch regional centres of SATIS have, to date, deliberately sought out small firms as potential members. In each area, and without regard to the size of the organisation seeking membership, a flat annual fee of $25 was being levied at the end of 1979.

All enquiries from firms outside the three metropolitan areas which cannot be answered by the public library system, are dealt with by the User Services staff of the National Library in Wellington, and queries unable to be resolved at any of the three SATIS centres, are referred by telex to User Services in Wellington.

There are plans to establish SATIS centres next in Dunedin and Hamilton, probably within the next few years. In early 1979 an *Information to Industry* seminar was held in Dunedin to make libraries in the smaller cities and towns aware of the importance of providing a wide-ranging information service to the business community, and of the many agencies, particularly the National Library, able to help with rapid access to specialised technical knowledge.

SATIS is a logical and very necessary extension of the service that a public library can give to the broader community. Its growth is certainly a tribute to the vision and drive of Robert Duthie and his Auckland associates who were its pioneers.

31

MOVING IN

SHIFTING HOUSE after an occupancy of 84 years is no simple task. Especially if one has accumulated during that time upwards of 260,000 books in addition to treasures of various kinds and a vast range of reference material.

Such, though, was the daunting task that faced the library staff at the end of 1971. They were to have just one month to make the move.

Fortunately, little of the furniture was to go, and none of the shelving. It made little difference that the destination was only across the road. It might as well have been 500 metres as 50. Almost everything had to be packed in collapsible cartons at one end, and unpacked at the other. Worse still, the system of one way (mostly wrong-way) roads in the area meant an average truckload time of ten minutes through some of the city's narrowest and busiest streets.

The doors of the central library were closed to the public on 29 October 1971. The next few weeks were a time for wearing jeans and jandals to work for the 80 or so staff of the central library and Pidgeon's building, augmented by a dozen or so able-bodied young men hired to do the heavy work.

Down from the attics and the stacks they came, thousands upon thousands of books, documents, maps, bound volumes of newspapers and periodicals, carried with care or lowered on pallets by block and tackle. Into the cartons in subject department and strict Dewey classification order went shelf on shelf of the volumes of the reference department, to be slid expertly down the marble staircase on tightly-held strips of strong canvas. Piled high in vans straddling the footpath at the main doors were row upon row of fiction from "A" for Aarons to "Z" for Zwerenz, music scores, long-playing records, art reproductions and seemingly endless heaps of magazines.

On a smaller scale, the staff at Pidgeon's building were involved in the same operation. In the new library, a third squad of the staff accepted the outpourings from both buildings and found each item its allotted place in one or other of the six subject departments.

Thus they fetched and carried, cheerful and uncomplaining day after day, watched with approval, one likes to feel, by the ghosts of many for whom the almost now-derelict old library must once have seemed like a second home – by the ghost of Prime Minister Peter Fraser, of whom it was said that the library could well have been the

permanent address in his pre-parliamentary days before the First World War; of his lieutenant, and a later prime minister, Walter Nash who, when he wanted a quotation verified, ignored the staff and went straight to John Barr; of the poet R. A. K. Mason, known to emerge on the hour after long study in the reference department for a quick smoke on the landing; of Robin Hyde, whose suitcase, opened to receive her reading for the weekend at Waiheke Island, revealed little more than washing, Weetbix and eggs to awe-struck junior assistants who fondly imagined that she lived only on Proust and honey-dew; and of library chief assistant, May McGuire, who was a formidable presence on staff for 36 years, and of Arthur Tilly who night-watched for 28.

The manuscripts and rare printings were carried by hand, Indian-file, across busy Wellesley Street, small items like the Ethiopic Scriptures [156] two or three at a time by small assistants, single volumes of the huge *Kingsborough's Antiquities of Mexico* [157] by the huskier of the hired helpers. The ghosts of Grey and the brothers Shaw would have approved.

What was not taken from the old building was later auctioned: tables of kauri, some as long as 19 feet (6m.), bookcases with glass panels, a large range of beautifully-crafted shelving, ladders, chairs, office desks, cabinets and counters and fluorescent light fittings.

Not all was disposed of legally. A truck-driver, ostensibly carrying rubbish to a tip, managed to include in his load a number of venerable bentwood chairs of the type much sought after by proprietors of coffee houses of the early 1970s. When apprehended, he admitted having sold seven to a second-hand dealer for $16 each. Not unnaturally he felt cheated when told that the going price for them was closer to $75 apiece. Fining him, the magistrate was moved to comment that the public who had sat on the chairs for so many years were obviously as unaware of their value as was the accused.

By 25 November 1971 the library portion of the 84-year-old building was near enough to being an empty shell.[158]

Times change, as does the newsworthiness of institutions like libraries. On the morning of 7 September 1880, when the Mechanics' Institute became the Auckland Public Library, the *New Zealand Herald* ran 17 inches (432mm) of editorial comment, plus a further 14 inches (356mm) on another page detailing Mayor Peacock's plan for the forthcoming evening's ceremony. The following day's issue of the paper devoted no fewer than 84 inches (2.13m), spread over four columns, as to what had been said in the old building the night before and by whom.

The *Herald* did the 1887 opening of the new library even prouder. Looking to the event to take place on the afternoon of 26 March occupied 39 inches (1000mm) of the leading article, with another 10 inches (254mm) added as a news item. Monday 28 March brought readers a further 22 inches (560mm) of editorial on the importance of the public library in the community, and a staggering 130 inches (3.3m, filling almost seven columns) of word-by-word reporting of the oratory of the five invited speakers.

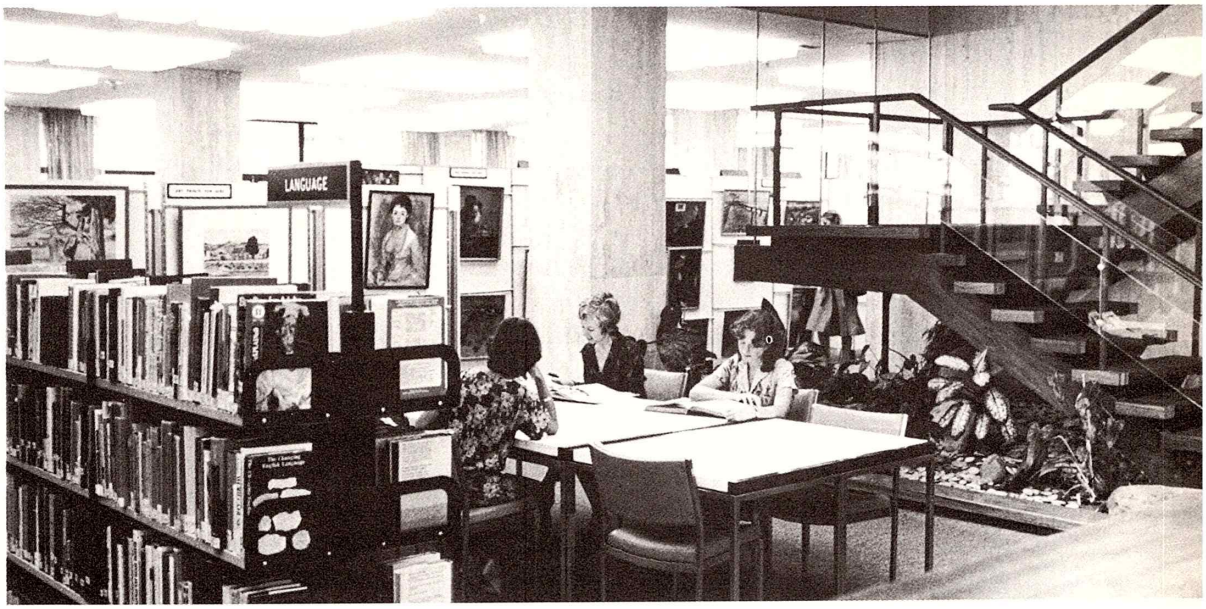
By comparison, the opening on Thursday 25 November 1971 of the first stage of the

Entry to the first stage of the new central library. To the left is the issue desk, in the centre the escalators linking the two public floors, the information desk and, extreme right, borrowers returning books.
Auckland City Council

library in Lorne Street passed almost unnoticed in the *New Zealand Herald*. Tucked into 10 inches (250mm) on page three of the following morning's issue was a bald account of the event of the day before. The *Herald's* headline news that day was "Pay Equality for Women Nearer", and the editorial, "Back to Arbitration. Equal Pay for Equal Work." (Which, given the circumstances had, for librarians, a touch of irony; in what was, and still is, a profession weighted numerically in favour of women, librarianship had for years paid for the position irrespective of whether it was filled by a man or a woman.)

The *Auckland Star* more than made up for the morning paper's neglect. On its front page for 25 November, a five-column-wide photograph captioned "Frankly Carol," posed a pretty assistant cheek to cheek with the library's portrait bust in bronze of author Frank Sargeson, by Alison Duff. Beneath the picture the paper gave a good five inches (127mm) to reporting the events of the morning. Inside, a comprehensive and perceptive editorial, headed "A splendid library – as far as it goes," summed up the situation well. "Auckland has every reason to be proud of its new Public Library officially opened today. It's a splendid building, it's equipped with all the modern devices that make book-borrowing sensible and swift, it's a city amenity we have long needed and long awaited . . .

"Yes, it's splendid – but only so far as it goes. It doesn't go as far as it was meant to.



Patrons on the first floor of the central library study in air-conditioned comfort against a background of art reproductions available for home hanging. The open-tread staircase to the right leads to the rare books room. Auckland City Council

What we have is just the first stage (100,000 sq.ft.) (9,290 sq.m.) of the entire project (160,000 sq.ft.) (14,864 sq.m.). Unhappily, the country's most prosperous city felt it couldn't really afford to spend more than around $3 million on the scheme just now. So it decided against buying the lease (due to end in 1974) of the adjoining theatre. Decided, too, that some first-stage features must be trimmed.

"This policy has had odd results. There are fewer books on the public shelves in the new library than there were in the old one across the road. There's the shell of a 300-seat auditorium, ideal for the city's cultural groups, in the lower basement – but no staircase leads to it, and it is without air-conditioning or lighting . . . An entire floor will stay unfinished, meanwhile. The newspaper reading room, one of the most popular parts of any public library, will stay in "temporary" quarters in Greys Avenue."

The editorial concluded: "Certainly we can be thankful for as much of the new library as we now have. But all Auckland will hope that present and future councils will not seek reasons to delay its completion. The expectation at the moment is that a start on Stage 2 could be made in September 1977. That would see the library finished in September 1980 – 100 years after it took over from the Mechanics' Institute. It's an historical landmark worth striving for."

The opening ceremony at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 25 November 1971 was a scaled-down occasion compared with those of 1880 and 1887. The speeches may not have been

better, but at least they were briefer. They were given by Dr R. H. Ferguson, the chairman of the city council's social welfare and cultural activities committee responsible for the library's operation; by the Mayor, Sir Dove-Myer Robinson; the president of the trustees of the Auckland Savings Bank, R. C. Reid; and the Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt, who declared the building officially open. This time there was no music, no song, no public participation, only morning tea for the invited guests once the commemorative plaque at the entrance had been unveiled.

For the rest of the day work went on preparing the library for the public the next day. In the event, they could not be admitted until the following Monday because of the late arrival of essential shelving and furniture.

On the evening of the official day of opening, upwards of 200 staff members, present and past, gathered in the building for a party that included a nostalgic look over the old library and an inspection of the new. Together they contributed $400 to buy, as their gift for the occasion, the portrait bust of the Auckland poet, R. A. K. Mason, by Anthony Stones, which may be seen in the library.

They watched the cutting of a commemorative cake by Maud Graham (who, as Maud Ballantyne, had been on the staff of the central library from 1915-38) and John Barr, now a frail and ailing 84-year-old. Retired some 20 years, Barr had played no part in the planning of the new building, but Bob Duthie did him the honour of personally showing him over the new building before his death the following month, on 26 December. Rex Fairburn spoke for many in 1952 when he commented that John Barr had done a "great job for Auckland". In 1972 the city council recorded its tribute on a plaque erected among the several in the entrance vestibule of the old building in Wellesley Street East. It reads, "This plaque commemorates the services of John Barr O.B.E., Chief Librarian and Director of the Art Gallery, 1913-1952."

Some Aucklanders, looking at the reinforced structure in Lorne Street faced with its panels of Italian marble, found it "striking". Others said it was "dignified". It reminded some of the buildings in the Maginot Line.[159] Yet others observed only that it was "solid," or "squat". What critics thought depended obviously on their taste in architecture, and on what they considered a library should look like. "Wot, no windows?" was a typical comment in echo of Mr Chad.[160] Most people seemed prepared to admit that the building was a clear statement of function with its clean, sharp profile, its strong horizontal lines, and its deep, encircling band of smooth white marble. Though in marked contrast to its taller, slimmer and extensively-glazed neighbours, the library appeared not to suffer by comparison. Clearly it was too early for anyone to pass final judgement on a building only part completed. Already, though, its simple lines and harmonious use of materials contributed significantly to the architecture of Auckland.

There was no doubting public interest in the building. Although there was a passenger lift, adults, teenagers and children came to ride the twin escalators (the first to be installed in a library in Australia or New Zealand); to admire in the public areas the

specially-woven carpet in tonings of gold and brown and, in the rare book room with its gaboon mahogany panelling, the royal blue velvet pile carpet, which was repeated on the handsome open-tread staircase leading to the room from the first floor; to run their hands over the unpolished Travertine marble of the columns, and over the walls of pale, yellow-painted Scandinavian jute; to sit up to tables of satin chromium-finished metal frames on study chairs in light and dark browns and olive greens; and to relax in the smoking and exhibition area in easy chairs of black and navy blue.

In the first few months after opening, more than 10,000 Aucklanders joined the library as new members. Generally speaking, their only grumbles were at finding fewer books on the shelves than they had expected, and the difficulty of pushing open the heavy glass doors at the entrance.

For the staff, the credits far outweighed the debits. The two-stage development had dictated that adjacent subject departments share workrooms, and, already, 10,000 more users were adding to the workload. It was the first time in almost a decade that all the staff of central library had been together under one roof. Where once everything to be moved had to be man-handled or, more correctly, woman-handled, there were the luxuries of goods lift, trolley lift and book lift. The library was air-conditioned throughout, with the temperature maintained in most areas between 21 degrees and 25 degrees celsius, and with 50% to 55% relative humidity. Artificial lighting, giving an intensity of 60 ft candles at table height, was of the fluorescent type concealed in units that housed both the fittings and the air extraction grills. In case of power failure, a Rolls-Royce diesel generator would come into operation automatically, and protection from fire was provided by an early warning detection system. The rare books room and its adjacent stack areas enjoyed the added protection of automatic carbon dioxide diffusers set in the ceiling.

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THE SIX SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS

THREE OF THE SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS were on the level of Lorne Street. The commerce, science and technology department incorporated as aids for users a coin-operated photocopy machine, microfilm and microfiche viewers, dictating and typing rooms, and carrels or small rooms for private study. The social sciences department included the library's main information desk prominently positioned close to the

entrance, to the master card catalogue, the passenger lift and the escalators. The circulation (or recreational reading) department of free and rental fiction, biographies and books of travel, served as the point of issue and return of all books and periodicals borrowed from the central library. Public telephone and public toilet facilities were also provided on the ground floor.

On the floor above were the remaining three subject departments. In addition to housing a general bookstock and the collection of music scores and literature, the literature, arts and music department was responsible for the issue of art reproductions and long-playing records, and made available head-sets in alcoves for those wanting to listen to recordings from the library's collection. The adjacent New Zealand department comprised New Zealand fiction and general literature, government publications, periodicals, maps, manuscripts, historical photographs and Auckland newspapers on microfilm. It was – and remains – the only one of the subject departments from which borrowing is not permitted, although many of the items in it are duplicated in other departments. Associated aids – a coin-operated photocopy machine, microfilm viewers and reader-printer, dictating and typing rooms, and study rooms – were also provided in the New Zealand department. Public toilets were again located on this floor.

The children's department offered the normal service of picture books, "easy-to-read" titles, fiction and general literature, magazines and reference books. Although it was to the branch libraries in Auckland's sprawling suburbs that children went more often than to the building in Lorne Street, the programme at the central library made provision for regular story-hour sessions, conducted class visits from schools through the children's and other departments, and similar activities.

The full potential of the children's department as a demonstration library cannot be realised until the completion of Stage 2 of the building. What will make this possible began as a Christmas gift in 1964, when an anonymous donor (not identified until 1980 as Mrs G. B. Colson) presented the library with a cheque for £5,000 ($10,000) for use in the children's section of the library yet to be built. In September 1971, just before the opening of the first stage, the city librarian was advised that Mrs Colson had died, bequeathing for the same purpose, a further $10,000. Her family wished to add to this already magnificent benefaction another $5,000, to make what is one of the largest monetary gifts received by the Auckland Public Library.

Acknowledging the bequest, Robert Duthie reported that a portion of the original donation had been used to provide a collection of books illustrating what are considered to be some of the best examples of children's literature produced in the English language, together with an annotated, printed catalogue of the collection. He referred to what is known today as the Model Collection of the children's department. It comprises picture books, fiction and general literature. Most of them are in the English language (with good representation from New Zealand writers). There are the long-established classics

like *Treasure Island*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Little Women* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Most, however, are printings of the last 40 years or so, and include such favourites as Ludwig Bemelman's *Madeline*, Virginia Lee Burton's *The Little House*, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods*, and Alan Garner's *The Owl Service*. Books in foreign languages are represented, and there is a small but growing selection of titles in some of the languages of Polynesia. The Model Collection is for reference purposes only, and is well used by parents, teachers, students and by children themselves. All English-language titles are also to be found in the lending stock of the children's department. Additions are made annually of the works of medal winners in the various fields of children's literature, and at the end of 1979 titles in the Model Collection numbered some 1,600.

Money from the bequest has also made possible the nucleus of a second collection planned as complementary to the Model Collection. This is the Historical Collection, comprising titles published before 1939 – most, in fact, carrying pre-1900 imprints. An exception has been made in the case of New Zealand writing, for which the publication date has been advanced to 1955. The intention of the children's librarian and her advisers is not to buy rare or old books, but rather to bring together a representative selection of what children of earlier times read and enjoyed. One may only guess at what they made of the oldest title so far to appear in the Historical Collection: *Romanae Historiae Anthologia Recognita et Aucta* (with its sub-title, *An English Exposition of the Roman Antiquities wherein many Roman and English Offices are Paralleled and Divers Obscure Phrases Explained*). The author was one Thomas Godwin, the date of publication 1661, and the book was intended "for the use of Abingdon School". Titles earlier than about 1920 are usually bought from children's antiquarian book dealers in Great Britain and the United States, and where the originals are considered to be too expensive, in facsimile reproductions.

Older visitors looking at the Historical Collection are often delighted to find in it the kind of reading they enjoyed in their childhood – authors like G. A. Henty, Ethel Turner, Talbot Baines Reed, Charlotte Yonge, James Fenimore Cooper, William Henry Kingston and Isabel Maud Peacocke, annuals like *Chums* and *The Boy's Own Paper*, and some of the earlier comics. Increasingly these people are searching out copies of their own books of yesteryear for presentation to a collection which, at the time of going to print, totals just under 1,500.

The quality of the staff that headed the subject departments of the new central library was the direct result of that section of the Munn-Barr report of 1934 which recommended professional training for librarians. "Means must be devised," they argued, "to raise the general and professional educational standards of librarians and assistant libra-

rians. It is recommended that for all urban public library systems . . . the matriculation examination of the University of New Zealand, or its equivalent, should be the minimum required for appointment to a library position . . . Salary increases and advancement in position should be made dependent upon satisfactory progress towards fuller training." Even more forward-looking was the recommendation of the co-authors that "As soon as the general level of salaries can be raised, only university graduates should be eligible for appointment to professional staffs."

Of the six departments, three were under the control of graduates of a library school: Patricia French (New Zealand department), Catherine Williamson (children's) and David Cass (commerce, science and technology). The three in charge of the remaining departments were long-serving librarians who had entered the profession before tertiary education was a pre-requisite for senior status. Their breadth of interests, ability to lead and to create enthusiasm among junior staff, and the happy knack of being able to introduce the right reader to the right book at the right time, more than compensated for any lack of academic achievement. They were Dorothy E. Lyon (literature, arts and music), Mary ("Mollie") C. Kilbride (circulation) and Coral M. Ridling (social sciences), who had been the librarian in charge of Leys Institute between 1953 and 1964. Joseph B. C. O'Neill, a graduate of the library school in Wellington, controlled the department concerned with ordering, cataloguing, classifying and the allied processes of book preparation, with the designation of Technical Services and Acquisitions Librarian. Section heads were Daphne Carruthers (rare books librarian), Edmond S. Stewart (head cataloguer), both of them library school graduates, and Una G. Smith (music librarian). Throughout the Auckland Public Library system of the central library and branches, there was a staff of some 90, 23 of them university graduates, of whom 17 held diplomas from library schools, and 27 assistants who held the certificate awarded after three years of in-service training.

33

REMEMBERING FAMOUS MEN

NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, the interest shown by Aucklanders in the new building was matched by the upsurge of business it generated. In the year ended 31 March 1973 free membership at central library rose 15.5%, and subscription members by 51.8%. In the same year, issues from the new Lorne Street building rose 34.5% to number some 474,780, against 353,003 of the previous year.

William Shakespeare, 1564-1616, sculpture in bronze by Paul Beadle in Auckland Public Library.

Frank Sargeson, born 1903, portrait bust by Alison Duff in Auckland Public Library.

Looking at the as-yet incomplete building, the critic who commented "this is three-fifths of a library that really works" [161] was right – in both senses of the word.

Watching the library work from vantage points around it were the portrait busts of three New Zealanders of eminence as writers, and an Englishman, copies of whose works give the Auckland Public Library a distinction unique in this country.

In 1966, the sum of £500 ($1,000) was willed to the Auckland City Council from the estate of Florence Walker, "For the creation of or as the nucleus of a fund for the erection of a statue of Shakespeare similar to that in Stratford-on-Avon in England."

The city council commissioned a portrait bust from Paul Beadle, professor of fine arts at the university of Auckland. Cast in bronze, it was completed in 1972, and shows Shakespeare holding at arm's length an orb representing mankind.

It had been planned to place the bust in the outdoor sculpture court of the city art gallery. When the director of the gallery was reluctant to locate the work outdoors, the city librarian accepted it for display in the rare books room of the new library.

About the time his first novel, *That Summer*, was published in 1943, the writer Frank Sargeson was a familiar figure in the reference department. They were the days when the work of prominent American authors were not so well represented in the library as they should have been, and when the library inter-lending scheme did not allow titles of fiction to be requested. To make sure that Sargeson could have the copies of Willa

Cather, Sherwood Anderson and Erskine Caldwell that he wanted, the staff were careful always to add to the request card, "wanted for a serious purpose by a well-known local author". Sargeson had become a writer of international repute when the Arts Advisory Council of New Zealand (the forerunner of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand) in 1963 commissioned a portrait bust of the author of *I Saw in My Dream* for presentation to the Auckland Public Library. Frequently in the years before the bust was placed in position in the new library, the puckish figure, spade-bearded and pack on back, would be seen in the lending department of the old building as Sargeson in the flesh approvingly circled Sargeson in bronze.

John A. Lee, too, approved of his likeness by sculptor Molly Macalister, commissioned by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand. On behalf of the arts council it was presented to the library on "indefinite loan" by Professor John Reid in 1972.

Several libraries had lobbied for the papers of this stormy petrel of New Zealand's politics, author and controversialist. It was to the Auckland Public Library that he left his collection of manuscripts, letters, diaries and political papers, including a complete file of his fiery periodical, *John A. Lee's Weekly*.

With the likeness of Sargeson waggishly overlooking the New Zealand department, and Mason sternly surveying the scene in the literature, arts and music department, Lee for his "indefinite stay" was positioned in the social sciences department.

Following his death in July 1971, friends and admirers of Ron Mason felt that the man who had contributed so much to literature, and to the trade union movement in New Zealand, deserved more public recognition than a bust in the library – fitting as that was.

Painter Colin McCahon suggested that the city council plant a memorial tree. At first the council declined, then resolved to reconsider the matter if there was evidence of "considerable" public support. In September 1971 Professor John Reid and 18 others wrote to the council urging that Mason's life and work be commemorated by a plaque or by the planting of a tree. "It is our belief," they said, "that New Zealanders only too seldom commemorate the achievements of their creative artists, and we feel the City Council have in this instance an opportunity to set an example in remembering the life and work of an outstanding Auckland writer." Their letter was followed by a second from McCahon and 45 others, recommending the planting of a memorial tree behind the new city library building (at the apex of the library where Rutland Street meets Wellesley Street East).

Still hesitant, the council thought that an area where New Zealanders who had made an impact in cultural fields could be commemorated, might be set aside later in the year.

Poet Allen Curnow was quickly into print. "R. A. K. Mason," he wrote to the *New Zealand Herald*, "stands first among New Zealand poets: first in time to display a unique gift, and first, too, by a formidable consensus of opinion, here and overseas, for the fineness of his best lyrics. Is it necessary to repeat this? Apparently so, since the City

John A. Lee, born 1891, portrait bust by Molly Macalister in Auckland Public Library.

R. A. K. Mason, 1905-1971, portrait bust by Anthony Stones in Auckland Public Library.

Council can do no better than 'recommend that his name be noted' for commemoration at some unspecified date, and if and when the Council sets aside an area for memorials to 'New Zealanders . . . outstanding in cultural fields.' It takes so very little imagination to visualise such a local cultural necropolis or the arguments about who is, or is not 'outstanding.' If the word means anything, it must mean just that. This man indeed stands out. Let any memorial to him, however modest, do likewise in some frequented public place, where the passer-by or visitor may note it, and reflect that Auckland is a city where such men are honoured and pride is taken in them."

Curnow's own idea had been a simple stone pedestal with a bronze plaque in Albert Park, where Mason had walked many times over the years, between the university and Kitchener Street to see some of his best work through the Unicorn Press, and where printers Robert Lowry and Ronald Holloway occupied joint premises in the 1930s. "If Mr McCahon's idea of a memorial tree behind the new library finds more favour," Curnow's letter continued, "I would not think of pressing my own. I feel sure the City Councillors will think again about their suggestion. It can only have resulted from uncertainty on their part and its immediate effect is an offence rather than honour, to

the memory of a uniquely distinguished son of the city." [162] The council did think again. The outcome was the placing of a young totara tree with an accompanying plaque at the southwestern corner of the library at the intersection of Lorne Street and Rutland Street.

34

THE CITY LENDS A HELPING HAND

IN THEIR SURVEY in 1934, Ralph Munn and John Barr had stressed the importance of libraries in the community: "Their value is such that, like schools, they should be freely at the service of all in the interests of better citizenship." John Barr had been even more emphatic in a newspaper interview some 12 months later. "Public libraries," he said, "are not luxuries; they are necessities." [163] But, with notable exceptions – such as Auckland's – they were in a backward condition in 1934. So prompt and enterprising, however, was their reconstruction in the years following the Munn-Barr report, that Munn was able, in 1944, to describe their improvement as a "minor miracle".

By 1960 the New Zealand Library Association was nevertheless aware that there was still much hard work to be planned and undertaken. As a consequence, it requested financial help from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to have a survey made of New Zealand's libraries, public, academic and special. This was carried out in the same year by Dr Andrew D. Osborn, librarian of Sydney University.

"As a group," Osborn reported, "public libraries are easily the brightest spot in the New Zealand library picture. Their average quality is distinctly high, although they range from the unjustifiably bad to the excellent. Some idea of the excellence of the best of the public libraries, can be gained from the fact that the Auckland Public Library is the largest library in the country . . ." [164]

Osborn's was a deserved pat on the back for Duthie and for the manner in which in eight years he had built upon the basis so splendidly laid by John Barr. Duthie was to receive professional recognition of his achievement in 1966, with the award of the charter of a Fellowship of the New Zealand Library Association (FNZLA) "for resolute, successful and sustained insistence on standards of practice in the inauguration and development of a major free library service".

What disturbed Osborn in 1960 was that many tens of thousands of New Zealanders

were without access to libraries in their community. Preponderantly, these people were in urban areas. In greater Auckland the position was probably worse than anywhere else. No less than 42% of the metropolitan population was without any form of library service. In particular, Osborn lambasted the three "Mounts" which together comprised the blackest spot in public library service in Auckland – Mt Albert, Mt Eden and Mt Roskill.

That was in 1960. It would take a further 17 years of persuasion and patient prodding by residents of those areas, by the New Zealand Library Association, and by the city librarian, Duthie – careful always not to appear that he was advocating anything like a "takeover bid" – before nearly 100,000 Aucklanders received the kind of library service that the reports of 1934 and 1960 saw as their right.

The credit for one of the earliest attempts to provide co-operative library service in Auckland must go to One Tree Hill. The borough took its unusual name from the original tree (apparently either a totara or a puriri) that once graced the summit of the hill which the Maoris called "Maungakiekie", the mountain where the climbing plant "kiekie" formerly grew. The hilltop is also the burial site of Sir John Logan Campbell, who bequeathed to the city Cornwall Park which lies beneath the hill; beside his grave rises an obelisk dedicated to Anglo-Maori friendship.

In 1936 the mayor of One Tree Hill suggested that a library be built in the borough, and that the Auckland City Council grant equal facilities and concessions to ratepayers and residents of both the city and the borough. The city concurred, but the mayor of One Tree Hill failed to get the support he needed from his own council. Another 36 years were to elapse before a combined city-borough service was achieved.

By 1972 One Tree Hill's population of about 12,000 was still too small to support a library of its own. Most who lived in the borough – and much of it was occupied by open domain land and by industry – were not too far from Auckland's branch libraries at Epsom and Remuera. The city council suggested and the borough accepted a financial arrangement by which the borough's ratepayers, residents and their families had access to all the services offered by the central library and branch libraries, together with a half-day service from the mobile library to the outlying parts of the borough. The service began on 1 April 1972, and although only about 30% of One Tree Hill's population are registered borrowers of the Auckland Public Library system, the number is still some six times above that which used the library service before the period of co-operation began.

Ellerslie – so named by Robert Graham, who came out from Scotland in 1842 on the *Jane Gifford* – is one of Auckland's less populous boroughs, currently some 6,000 residents. Its people have poor access to existing library facilities, except those at Remuera.

What the Ellerslie Borough Council asked the city to provide for an agreed fee, was mobile library service for one-half day each week. Somewhat reluctantly the city council

agreed, since such a service can be considered token at most. It began in October 1970.

Ellerslie borrowers thus have free use only of the mobile library which stops at two points in the borough on one afternoon each week. Should they want to borrow books from either the central or any of the branch libraries, Ellerslie residents must pay an annual subscription as do all others who do not contribute to the running of the city library system by way of rates or rent. Only some 13% of Ellerslie's population made use of the service in late 1979, and issues are seldom more than 25,000 annually.

And so to the three "Mounts" that so concerned Andrew Osborn in his 1960 survey.

The Maoris called the hill from which the district of Mt Albert takes its name, "Owairaka", meaning "belonging to, or the home of Wairaka", a chieftainess of the Ngatiawa tribe. In the 1840s both hill and suburb were named in honour of Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria. The borough of Mt Albert first approached the Auckland City Council in 1946 to ask for the extension of library facilities to its residents. In what can only be considered an enlightened attitude for the day, the borough went on record as in favour of suburban libraries being established in conjunction with city libraries on a metropolitan basis. As in the case of One Tree Hill ten years earlier, the city indicated its willingness to discuss a basis for financing such a scheme. Mt Albert baulked, however, at what was suggested as the very reasonable sum of two shillings per head (20 cents) of the borough's population for access to existing city facilities. (At that time the city was spending more than double the amount on behalf of its own ratepayers.)

It was not until 1972 that city and borough worked out an arrangement satisfactory to each, and in which the siting of the proposed branch in Mt Albert was not least of the stumbling blocks. Some of the borough councillors wanted it to be part of the community centre in the comparative isolation of New North Road near Kitenui Avenue. Duthie was able to persuade them that a library there would be a "dead duck". As he pointed out, the obvious location was in Cornwallis Street, alongside the St Luke's shopping centre.

The borough was to be responsible for building, furnishing and maintaining the library; the city would staff and stock it (with the cost of the basic collection being shared equally), and would operate the library as a branch of the Auckland Public Library system. In addition, Mt Albert residents were to have free access to existing library facilities at the central library, all branches and the mobile library.

By agreement, the borough (today the city of Mt Albert) also pays to the city of Auckland an annual amount equivalent to the estimated cost of operating the Mt Albert library, and a charge for the use of the Auckland city libraries at a rate to be fixed by the Auckland City Council and reviewed annually.

The architectural firm of Gillespie, Newman and Pearce designed the library, of some 8,600 sq.ft. (800 sq.m.). It was officially opened as the Clarice Anderson Memorial Library (Mrs Anderson having been the mayoress of Mt Albert from 1936 to 1959) on

22 November 1975. Not least because of its location, the branch quickly established itself as one of the busiest in the system, with more than 42% of Mt Albert's residents enrolled as members after only 18 months of operation. And, despite the description by one councillor of its looking like "a small child with a hat pulled over its head", the building gained for its architects one of the awards issued annually for design by the Auckland branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

It is not known for certain how the area of Mt Roskill came by its name or when. The Maoris called the hill "Puketapapa" meaning "flat-topped hill". But Roskill? Some say it derived from Roskhill, a town on the isle of Skye, others that it is from Rosgill in Westmorelandshire. Local legend even had it that there was an early preacher and evangelist living there by the name of John Roskill. A deed of purchase of 1841 for a 13,000-acre block (5,261 hectares) in the district reads: "The southern boundary runs from One Tree Hill to Puketapapa (Mt Rascal) by Wairaka to the portage at Te Wao." Suffice to say that by 1862 it was, officially, Mt Roskill.

Mt Roskill came to co-operative library service with Auckland city by a route almost as tortuous as Mt Albert's. On 10 September 1958 the town clerk of the geographically-largest borough in Auckland, wrote to the city librarian: "Some interest has been shown locally of late in the establishment of a library in Mount Roskill without, I fear, those concerned having a real and lively appreciation of the possible costs ... Failing the establishment of a library by the Council, is there any possibility of an extension of the City's Library Service into this area?"

Duthie indicated both the possibility and the probable costs, to which the borough replied that, though the projected charges were too high, it would like to continue negotiations. The *New Zealand Herald* made the curt observation in July 1959 that, "there was obviously no rush for library service. Mt Roskill has shelved it, Mt Eden has declined it, Mt Albert has deferred it, and none have libraries, with a total population among them of 73,000."

The "real and lively appreciation" of the residents referred to by the borough's town clerk was to continue, just as the negotiations suggested by the borough were to continue in an on-again, off-again manner over the next 16 years.

In 1975, when its population had passed the 34,000 mark, Mt Roskill asked Auckland city for a library service similar to that operating so successfully in nearby Mt Albert. Mt Roskill, because of its geographical sprawl, also requested a weekly service from the mobile library.

Settling on a site for the building was a major problem. Finally, the decision was taken to locate it in what was known as Stage I of the Roskill centre – a two-storey, multi-purpose block at the corner of Three Kings Road and Mt Albert Road, and in what is planned to become a major area of shopping, commercial and community activities. An Auckland architect, Malcolm Brown, was retained by the borough council to design a library of some 9,000 sq.ft. (836sq.m.) on the upper floor of the centre,

approached by a ramp from a car park and an entry from Mt Albert Road. The financial arrangement between the city and the borough was to be the same as between the city and Mt Albert, with the addition of mobile library service to the more distant parts of the borough at least one day each week. Opened on 20 August 1977, the library at Mt Roskill very quickly established itself as the busiest of all the branches, recording in the year ended March 1979, issues of almost 400,000, as compared with 371,000 at Remuera and 355,000 at Mt Albert.

"Maungawhau" was what the Maoris called the highest hill (196 metres) on the Auckland isthmus – "the mountain where the whau tree grew". The early settlers of Auckland preferred to give it Lord Auckland's family name of Eden. The borough that came into being in 1906 had long flirted with the idea of a public library. As its town clerk reported in 1970: "The question of a public library is raised periodically within this borough. There have been suggestions to establish a Public Library as a single entity, for the Council to combine with the Auckland City Council and extend that Council's Public Library's facilities into the borough, and also for the Auckland Regional Authority to take over the Public Library services within its district. Over the years all proposals have been rejected, mainly on the grounds of cost to the ratepayer."

It had been to the advantage of Mt Eden rather than to the residents of Auckland city's Grafton area, that the branch in Mt Eden Road just off Symonds Street had survived the proposal of the city council to close it in 1960. With the borough still dithering in 1973, Robert Duthie wrote to the Mt Eden town clerk in April, enquiring whether the borough councillors were likely to take any action on library service that would involve the city. The reply was that no action was planned to be taken at the moment, but that the borough would like a costing for the following year (1973/74) "so that consideration can be given at that time as to whether the scheme should proceed or not". In the event it did not. Grabbing again at the straw offered by Grafton branch – though it lay inconveniently for most residents of Mt Eden at the northern extremity of the borough – the Mt Eden council in 1973 announced its decision to subsidise the subscriptions of its residents who were or who would become members of the Auckland Public Library system. For children of up to the age of 18 years, the subsidy would be 100% of the subscription, for pensioners 80%, and for all other adults 50%. The plan was a clumsy one, in that having taken out a subscription membership to the Auckland Public Library system, Mt Eden residents had then personally to claim a refund from the borough council. The inconvenience of the arrangement, and the fact that the borough council failed to give it the publicity needed to attract members, were the main reasons for membership languishing to the point where only 880 residents of Mt Eden's 20,000 were taking advantage of the subsidy scheme.

Proof that the subsidy scheme lacked appeal was given in a letter from the city librarian to the town clerk of Mt Eden in December 1977. Whereas 50% of Mt Albert's residents, 30% of One Tree Hill's, and 30% of Mt Roskill's (after only three months of

operation of that borough's new building), were enrolled as members of the Auckland Public Library, the comparable figure for Mt Eden was a niggardly 6%.

The upshot was a recommendation from Duthie on 3 May 1978, echoing his earlier one of 1960, that because of declining patronage the Grafton branch be closed on 31 March 1979. The number of members had sunk to 1186, of whom some 28% were non-city ratepayers or residents. Mt Eden membership of the Auckland Public Library system had dropped over a four-year period from 1974-78 from 465 to 329. Issues had declined from an annual 70,000 in 1968 to 60,000 over the span of ten years.

Once more there was protest from those living in the Grafton area; once more the city council was persuaded to delay closing the library, this time at the request of the Mt Eden borough council. The borough council decided to abandon its "pay now, claim later" system of membership by its residents, and accepted the suggestion of the city librarian to enrol Mt Eden residents as "free" members of the Auckland Public Library, and render the borough a quarterly account for the value of each subscription. For its part, the borough council made good the promise of publicising the service more effectively than it had done in the past. And at the Grafton library, librarian Catriona M. Munro (a daughter of John Barr's), and her assistants worked hard and long to create and hold the interest of users. Membership increased by 580 in a year, and the rising issue rate suggested that an annual average figure could be achieved of some 74,000 (compared with 60,000 for the previous year). For the second time in 20 years, Grafton was spared the axe; again it was mainly for the benefit of people living outside the city area.

The people of Mt Eden now enjoy full and free access to the libraries of the city system (including those operated on behalf of Mt Albert and Mt Roskill). Obviously, however, they will savour the full benefits of library service only when a building is provided for them in a convenient location within their own borough.

Robert Duthie was asked in 1977, at about the time that service was being extended to Mt Roskill, what were the advantages, if any, of co-operative service. He said he doubted whether there were any from the Auckland City Council's point of view, other than the obvious ones of working together towards a common goal, having reciprocal use of facilities over a wider area, and a uniformity of procedures. "The advantages," he went on, "seem to be almost wholly with the smaller authorities, and while some may regret the lack of complete independence and autonomy, I am certain that, on reflection, few would seriously question the value of being able to tap the resources of a larger and well-developed organisation ... Good library service, however, and this is surely the only kind worth considering, is expensive. It is a matter of record that the Auckland City Council spends more on its library service, both in toto and per capita, than any other authority in the country, and smaller authorities must be very conscious of this when considering whether or not to establish a co-operative service with the city. Big is not always better, nor is size necessarily synonymous with efficiency or economy. Nevertheless, I believe that co-operation with a larger unit does offer economic, as well as other

advantages . . . In short, I believe that co-operation with a large system has so much to offer the small authority that it should always be considered as a possible alternative to the establishment of a separate service and even the development of an existing one." [165] By the end of 1979, more than 30,000 satisfied Aucklanders in the once library-benighted "Mounts" were agreeing with him.

35

"A GIFT THOUGH SMALL IS PRECIOUS"

IN AN AUCKLAND STAR message to the people of Auckland on the opening of the new library, the mayor, Sir Dove-Myer Robinson, commented that Auckland had been most fortunate since its foundation "in having citizens who have not only shown initiative and enterprise, but generosity."[166]

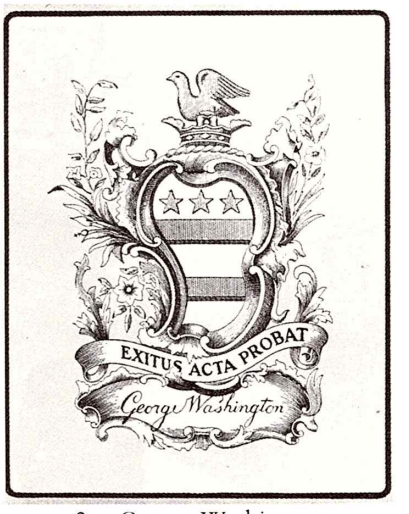
Their generosity to the public library continued through the 1970s. From the time the library opened, almost every year brought a gift.

In November 1971 the Girls' Brigade held a "walkathon" to raise funds to sponsor girls and potential leaders from under-privileged countries to an international camp to be held in Auckland. From the $8,000 collected they gave $1,000 for the reference section in the children's department. To mark their 50 years in business the fruit and vegetable marketing firm of Turners and Growers donated the sum of $1,000 for books on the subject of horticulture.

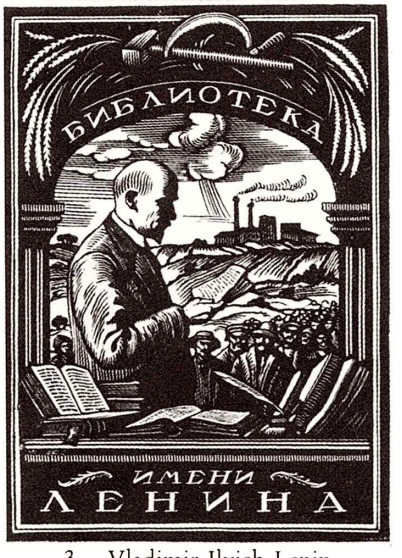
In the following two years the stock of the handsomely-endowed music section was augmented twice. In 1972 there was the addition of 1,500 volumes of piano music by Philip F. Prescott, an Auckland businessman. A year later came the deposit by Bishop's House, Ponsonby, of a collection of several hundred volumes of music scores including operatic, classical and choral. It is known sometimes as the Luck Collection in honour of John Edmund Luck, who was the Roman Catholic bishop of Auckland between 1882 and 1896. The reason for "deposit" of the collection as opposed to outright gifting has to do with a technicality of administration of the church.

Also in 1972, John A. Lee made available to the library collections of letters written by the New Zealand novelists Robin Hyde (the pen name of Iris Wilkinson, author of *The Godwits Fly* and *Check to your King*), and Jane Mander (*The Story of a New Zealand River* and *Allen Adair*), and by the poet-autobiographer, W. D'Arcy Cresswell (*Present Without Leave*).

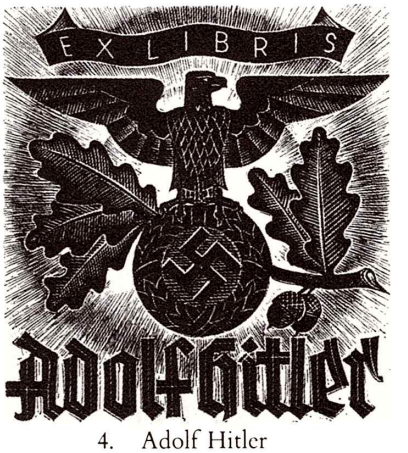
1. Samuel Pepys



2. George Washington

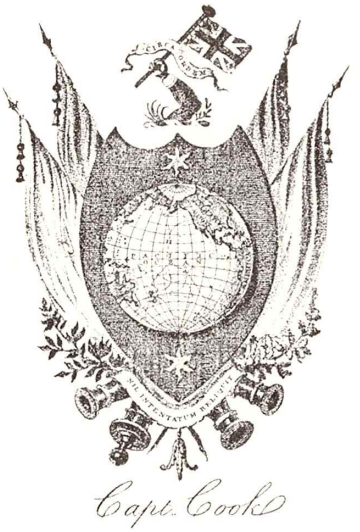


3. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

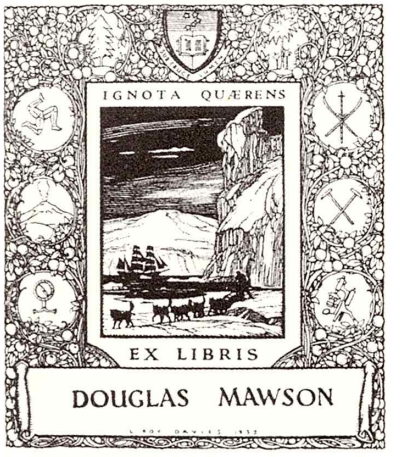


4. Adolf Hitler

A selection of book-plates from a few of the famous – and infamous – figures of history represented in the Hilda Wiseman Collection in the Auckland Public Library. Photos Auckland City Council

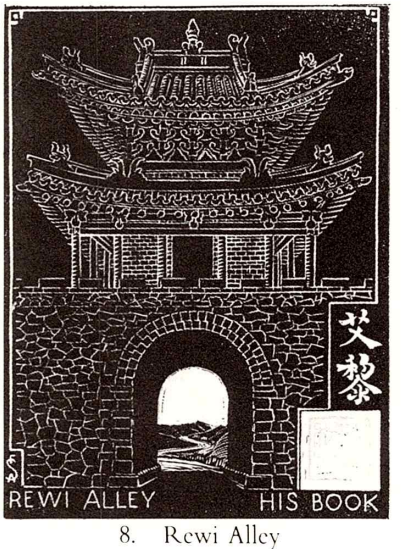


5. Captain James Cook



6. Sir Douglas Mawson

7. Sir Charles Kingsford Smith



8. Rewi Alley

The Hilda Wiseman Collection comprises over 1500 bookplates, some of her own design but most obtained from their owners or other collectors.

Photos Auckland City Council

Charles E.H. Putt was the Auckland City Council's first town planning officer, and an artist of ability. After his death in 1975 his family presented to the library Putt's collection of more than 200 drawings, mostly in pencil. Many reflect his interest in architecture, particularly the architecture of churches, and in dozens of the donated sketches he recorded the intricate details of many of Auckland's best-known and best-loved churches.

For 28 years Freida Dickens was a figure familiar to Auckland concert and theatre-goers behind the booking counter of Lewis Eady's in Queen Street. For a further 17 she served as the courteous box-office assistant at His Majesty's theatre. In 1976 she made it known that she would donate to the library her collection of some 2,500 theatre and concert programmes built up since 1911. They came to the library the following year.

For many of the 16 years that the central library and branches had operated the photo-charging issue system, the trustees of the Auckland Savings Bank had met the total cost of plastic wallets to hold membership cards. When the computerised system of book issuing was being prepared in 1978, the bank agreed to pay for the production of the 120,000 membership cards needed to launch the scheme.

Many Aucklanders remember the studio of artist Hilda Wiseman in Epsom, with its beautiful diamond-paned windows salvaged from the old St Stephen's school in Parnell. Over the years a number of them must have sent and received Christmas cards of New Zealand birds and flowers designed and hand-printed by the woman who, in 1967, won the competition to design a coat-of-arms for the new city of Manukau.

Late in 1979 Miss Wiseman made good the promise she had given John Barr 30 years before when both were active members of the Auckland ex-Libris Society. She presented to the library her valuable and comprehensive collection of book-plates, representative of collectors around the world.

Of the more than 1,500 gathered over a long period, some 1,200 were already mounted at the time of presentation. The New Zealand selection includes a number designed by Hilda Wiseman herself.

So far as most of the items are concerned, interest centres more on the design of the plate than on the identity of its owner. When, however, the bookplate happened to belong to Hitler or Lenin, Pepys or Washington, Mawson or Kingsford-Smith, Captain James Cook or Rewi Alley, the uniqueness of the Wiseman collection becomes apparent.

In thus rounding off a decade of remarkable gifting, Hilda Wiseman's gesture was proof – if proof were needed – of what the mayor must have had in mind in 1971 when he said that Aucklanders' "generosity, loyalty to one's city and aid in its undertakings" were the "foundations on which its expansion and success must depend."[167]

("A gift though small is precious" is a
quotation taken from Homer's *Odyssey*.)

36

SERVICE IN THE SEVENTIES

On many occasions after he became city librarian in 1953, Robert Duthie must have been reminded of the words of that other Scot as to how

"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley."[168]

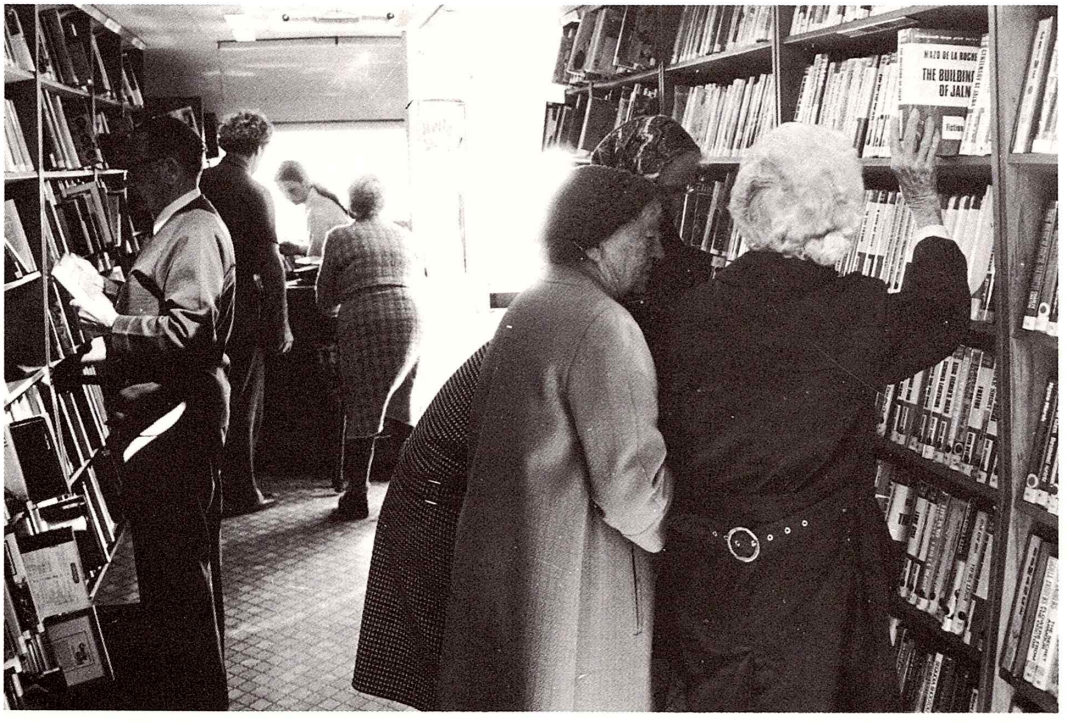
There was a time, just after the mid-1970s, when it seemed that the high points of his career would peak neatly at three-yearly intervals. The first stage of the new central library had opened in 1971. In 1974 his pioneering co-operative information-sharing service between local industry and commerce (ACTIS), based on the central library, became the regional centre for a nation-wide service (SATIS) co-ordinated by the National Library.

The opening of the new library at Mt Roskill in 1977, as a joint enterprise of city and borough, provided (as in the case of Mt Albert two years earlier) the most sensible and satisfactory solution to extending service to some 34,000 Aucklanders.

Had all gone according to plan, the fourth high point should have been the completion of the second stage of the central library in the centennial year of 1980. Obviously that was not to be. While planning for it went steadily ahead so, too, did the work of extending existing facilities and services.

By the mid 1960s it had become clear that what Duthie had called the "assembly-line type of issuing" on the original mobile library was particularly unsatisfactory for the children who made up the majority of the van's patrons. Nor could school libraries meet the demands of increasing numbers of young readers who lived a long way from branch libraries.

The decision of the city council to build a second, larger mobile library, gave the chance to introduce a new kind of service. Following discussion with the national librarian in 1967, Duthie gained the approval of the council to retain the original mobile library for use as a co-operative service to schools in the area controlled by the Auckland City Council. The council agreed to provide the vehicle and driver, the School Library Service (a division of the National Library) the bookstock and the staff. Eight primary and intermediate schools, each of them more than three kilometres from a branch library, were selected to take part in the service. The children's librarian visited each to explain the proposed service and ask the co-operation of teachers to ensure that the



Large-print books are in demand, as senior citizens of Selwyn Village, Pt Chevalier, choose their reading during the weekly visit of the mobile library. Auckland Public Library

maximum use would be made of the van's time at the school. The service began on 6 October 1970, with each school being visited weekly. So enthusiastic was the response that more than 33,000 books were issued in the first five months, with the van continuing to provide a service during the school holidays. It was an experiment that broke new ground in the field of central and local government co-operation. Only the limitation of stock and staff prevented extension to a greater number of schools.

Unfortunately, staffing shortages in the School Library Service virtually ended their participation in the scheme by mid-1972. The service was carried on by the public library until the end of the second term of 1977, by which time over 400,000 issues had been made in seven years and most of the schools involved had developed libraries of their own able to meet the needs of pupils. With the discontinuation of the service the 1950 vehicle was sold to the Takapuna City Council.

The second mobile library, which went on the road on 22 May 1970, was bigger in every way than the 1950 vehicle – longer, wider, higher, heavier and carrying some 2,500 books, as compared with the 1,200 on the shelves of the original van. The staff of two comprised driver and assistant, with the driver operating the photo-charging camera from his swivel driving seat. A near-mate of the second vehicle (but carrying some 500

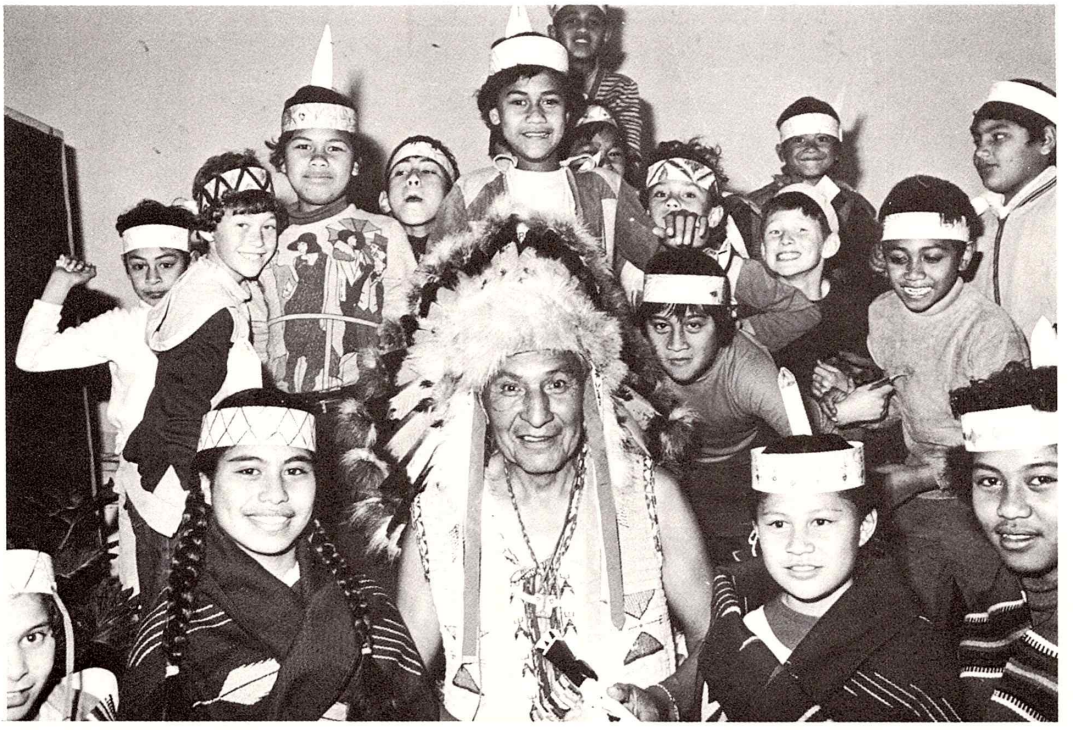
Mobile library assistants bring books from the public library to elderly patients in the hospital of St Andrew's Home at suburban Glendowie. Auckland City Council

more books) was introduced on 22 August 1977. The two Bedford vehicles between them, cover areas of Auckland city still not well served by branch libraries – such as Blockhouse Bay, Orakei, St Johns and parts of Meadowbank and Kohimarama – as well as Ellerslie and the outlying parts of One Tree Hill and Mt Roskill. They also have stopping-points outside a number of senior citizen housing developments, and at several of the larger convalescent and rest-homes for older folk. One of the mobile libraries will also give service until the end of 1980 to two small schools still in the process of developing their libraries to the point where they can exist without public library help.

Both vehicles, which are on the road during daylight hours Monday to Friday, are housed overnight at the central library, on whose stock of free and rental fiction, non-fiction, children's and large-print books they draw daily to "top up" their shelves.

Children's library service of a radically different kind will be realised if a suggestion from the Auckland Hospital Board to the Auckland City Council comes to pass.

In a letter to the town clerk in September 1976, the chief executive for the board referred to a 250-bed children's hospital which it was proposed to erect on the Auckland Hospital site. The board thought it could be 1983 or later before the building was completed. In deciding on the services that should be available in the building, board



American Indian Afternoon at Grey Lynn branch library. Flanking "King Stabler", are children of Maori, Samoan, Niuean, Cook Islands Maori and Pakeha descent – all of them regular users of Auckland city's most cosmopolitan library. Auckland Public Library

members had agreed to ask the city council to set up a branch of the library in the children's hospital.

The council approved the suggestion in principle in October 1976. In his report to the council, Robert Duthie found the proposal "interesting, imaginative" and, he believed, "without precedent in New Zealand." (Dunedin Public Library has for many years provided a library service to patients in hospitals, but the proposal actually to set up a branch library in a hospital, and in a children's one at that, was unique in New Zealand.)

Much needs to be discussed before the scheme can be realised. To date, the hospital board is empowered to provide no more than accommodation and equipment, with the possibility only of making a grant towards the cost of a *basic* bookstock. Still to be resolved is the question of where the responsibility for providing and planning a library service in such a hospital should lie. Not least important is the fact that, in late-1979, the decision even to build the children's hospital has yet to be taken.

Nobody was satisfied with what passed for the public library at Avondale from the day in 1931 when it opened in the old wooden building that had been the borough hall and offices. Least of all Councillor Ellen Melville and members of her library committee.

Representative of the numerous groups from the Pacific Islands which have made Auckland "the capital city of Polynesia", are these young patrons, photographed in the United Nations' International Year of the Child. Auckland Public Library

They considered it only a temporary stage in the development of library service in a fast-growing residential area. Like many "temporary" buildings it had taken on a permanent look as the years passed.

In the 1930s it was well enough located, close to the post office and surrounded by a few small shops. By the end of the 1940s it was beginning to be out on a limb. The trams to town now ran from the corner of Rosebank Road and Great North Road, a kilometre or so to the north, where the building of new shops, banks and a post office left the library with a cinema as its only neighbour of substance.

In the initial flush of enthusiasm for developing community centres, the city council in 1950 decided that a new library for Avondale should be included in a centre proposed

for the area between Great North Road and Highbury Street. Plans were prepared for it and an application made to the loans board for approval to raise finance for a library "and other projects". Then, as with Glen Innes on the other side of the city where proposals were afoot to erect a library similarly sited, public interest in community centres waned. Another decade went by with nothing achieved. In the early 1960s Glen Innes was given the nod for a new library ahead of Avondale because Avondale at least had a building while Glen Innes was restricted to school rooms and shop premises.

By June 1970 an exasperated city librarian reported that the Avondale library was operating "in a dilapidated corrugated iron and weatherboard building erected during the latter half of the last century. It serves a population of 29,000, which is expected to increase to 35,000 by 1976 . . . during the last few years Avondale branch has shown a greater increase in issues and membership than any other branch of the Auckland Public Library system . . . The present library is wholly inadequate in terms of area and shelving space and particularly in facilities for children's work and a new building is urgently required if library services of a reasonable standard are to continue to be provided in this area."[169]

Soon there was action. An application by the council for a loan to build the 8,000 sq.ft. (743 sq.m.) library designed by the city architect and his staff was approved by the loans board. Construction of the $135,000 single-storey building began in May 1972 and the new library was opened by the Mayor, Sir Dove-Myer Robinson, on 18 September 1973. A handsome structure in brick with exterior finish in stone, carpeted in its public areas and planned to hold some 25,000 volumes, it is located in Rosebank Road, just off a busy shopping area. In its first full year of operation on the new site it recorded an issue of 240,000 compared with 203,000 in the last year of service in the old premises.

Three other branches underwent change in the 1970s, two substantially so.

Pt Chevalier library had for more than 20 years sat surrounded by the ever-increasing noise of passing traffic headed for the north-western motorway a kilometre or so further on.

The 1972 re-alignment of Carrington and Pt Chevalier Roads gained for the branch a new ramped entry on its eastern flank where a sitting-out area had been formed. But it added to the din of vehicles passing the staff-room, work-room and the children's area on the side to the west.

Confined as it was on a deep, narrow section, Epsom branch had nowhere to go but back from Manukau Road to find more space in 1973. The extension of some 1000 sq.ft. (93 sq. m.) added nothing to the appearance of the building, but for staff in their workroom and public sitting in easy chairs on carpeted floors, the retreat from a busy main thoroughfare brought quiet of a kind unknown at Pt Chevalier.

A new look was given in 1979 to the branch library at St Heliers Bay (it had been extended on its northern side in 1956). Pushing the eastern wall out into what had earlier been a works depot of the city council, and latterly part of a shoppers' open-air

car-park, produced a badly-needed extra 1,500 sq.ft. (140 sq.m.) of public space, including an activities room for work with younger patrons of the library. Again, the laying of carpet and the provision of comfortable new furniture improved dramatically the welcoming appearance of one of the most popular of the system's branch libraries.

Meanwhile, in the city itself, staff settled down to meet the increasing demands being made by the public on their "three-fifths of a new library". From the old building they had taken a total of some 260,000 books, 16,000 music scores, 4,500 long-playing records and 1,100 art reproductions. The addition of some further 275,000 books in the branches meant that there was no collection in any other municipal library in Australia or New Zealand larger than Auckland's. In 1975, there were 4.08 books in the Auckland system for every member of the library, as compared with figures of 3.26 for Dunedin and 2.66 for Wellington. By March 1978 the annual issue from the central library, branch libraries and the mobile libraries would exceed three million for the first time.

Interestingly enough, the total of some 3,073,415 issues from the Auckland Public Library in the 1977-78 year matched near enough the population of the country of 3,151,400. The significance lay in the fact that while Aucklanders borrowed more books from the library each year, more New Zealanders continued to quit the country to live overseas.

It was a time of change at senior library staff level as well. In December 1972, Joan V. Rutter retired after 33 years' service, 12 as branch librarian at Remuera and eight as branch library supervisor, based on the central library. She was replaced in the latter position by Carolyn M. Read (with the designation branch liaison librarian), but re-joined the staff in 1977 to take control of the new library at Mt Roskill. Herbert Pemberton came from England in early 1974 to become commerce, science and technology librarian, succeeding fellow-Briton David Cass, who was soon to move to a similar post in the Canterbury Public Library. In November 1979, Jennifer Walker, the music librarian since 1976, was appointed to be in charge of the literature, arts and music library after Dorothy Lyon stepped down following a total service of 30 years, including 17 as reference librarian and eight in control of the literature, arts and music department.

As early as 1948, the Director of Libraries of the United Nations advised that a world-wide network of depository libraries for its publications was to be established. He asked whether the Auckland Public Library would accept the privileges and obligations of a depository library. Conscious of the honour being done it, and knowing that no other library in New Zealand had been approached, the city council readily accepted the offer.

In 1975 the Director of the Dag Hammarskjold Library (United Nations) drew attention to the fact that some depository libraries, including Auckland, were not complying with one of the conditions required of depository libraries. This referred to the employment of full-time professional and clerical staff to organize and administer the UN Collection.

As Robert Duthie reported to the council on 8 May 1975, the library had not been able to allocate more than part-time assistance to maintain the collection. "Apart altogether from our obligation to honour the conditions which we must have accepted when we agreed to become a depository library some 25 years ago, it is becoming increasingly evident that the growth and use of the UN Collection, together with publications of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation), EEC (European Economic Community), GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, later to be known as ESCAP, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) require the services of a full-time professional librarian."[170]

What concerned the city librarian was an advertisement he had seen in a professionally-circulating journal for a librarian to set up the UN Depository Collection in Victoria University of Wellington. "There may be no significance in this in terms of our situation," he wrote, "but it would be in our interest, I am sure, if I could advise the Director that the UN Collection had been placed in the charge of a full-time professional librarian."[171] He recommended the creation of the position of a "documents librarian" with responsibility for the special collections he had noted in his report. A year later and still without the authority to engage the librarian he needed, Duthie was to point out that it was because of its standing in the country that the Auckland Public Library had been designated a depository library.

Authority was finally given in August 1976 to make the appointment on 1 April 1977, "sooner if the salary for the position could be accommodated within your existing budget". This proved possible, and Peter G. Shearer, a graduate of the New Zealand Library School, was appointed to the position of documents librarian in December 1976. Soon after Shearer had replaced J. B. C. O'Neill as Technical Services Librarian in July 1977, David N. Verran, also a graduate of the New Zealand Library School, took up the duties of documents librarian.

Along with his responsibility for the publications already listed, Verran's duties involved those of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and three World Bank agencies: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the International Development Association (IDA).

The valuable documents maintained by the library and freely available to all who seek information from them, include a selection of publications from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Council of Europe.

Occasional visitors to the new central library probably noticed little physical change until the last few years of the 1970s. In 1975 doors and a fire and smoke screen wall of

wired glass were erected at the top of the escalators at first floor level; they fulfilled fire regulations but destroyed the air of spaciousness achieved by the architects. The recreational reading department became officially the circulation department and, from October 1975, held only free and rental fiction. Titles of biography would henceforth be found in one or other of the subject departments.

A broad band of white marble takes the place of windows around the library's second floor. Behind the marble are the rare books room (open to the public), archives, storage for reserve stock and the photographic studio. In the studio the city's official photographer processes and prints work carried out on behalf of the various departments of the city council (except the art gallery, which employs a scientific photographer), records material for reference purposes for the subject departments, supplies prints ordered by the public from the library's extensive collections of historical photographs, and prepares photographic displays for the central and branch libraries.

Theft had been a problem from the library's earliest days, when the soap went missing and Edward Shillington recorded the loss of two novels in 1881. John Barr reported on the same subject in 1933. "Some people," he said, "would steal anything. As if losses of books were not enough, some person actually got away with a large palm which stood in a bronze bowl at the top of the stairway leading to the reference department." In 1959 Robert Duthie briefly banned bags and satchels from the reference department, but to little effect. First their contents, then the bags themselves began to disappear.

A proposal to incorporate a series of coin-operated lockers in the first stage of the new central library was eliminated on grounds of cost. Shortage of space and the heavy use made of the library during the working week, makes a "left-luggage" arrangement impracticable at present, save at weekends and public holidays. At these times, an attendant ensures that bags and satchels are left under his supervision in a limited area of open locker space.

It is to combat losses by readers giving false names that borrowers are now asked for identification before being enrolled as members of the library. Had such a procedure been in operation a decade or so before, one very junior assistant at a branch library would have been saved embarrassment. Her musical horizon bounded by the "Beatles", she was not unduly concerned when overdue notices for classical recordings borrowed in the names of Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert were returned from addresses in Ponsonby and Parnell marked "Not known at this address." It was only when the practical joker chose to sign the issue card Ludwig van Beethoven, that suspicion was aroused.

In an attempt to reduce the incidence of theft of this type, it is planned to introduce a "bug the book" scheme. At the time of going to print, the particular system of book detection has yet to be selected.

Under one such system library materials are marked with pressure-sensitive detection strips. When stimulated by an alternating electromagnetic field, the thin metallic strip

concealed in the book or periodical emits a low-frequency signal. As part of the issue procedure, the book is placed momentarily in a book check unit to desensitise the detection strip. As the borrower walks through an exit corridor, the desensitised strip does not trigger the detection equipment. On its return a book is placed momentarily in another unit to resensitise the detection strip.

It was accepted that until the second stage extended the ground floor over the area occupied by the cinema next door, staff and public would continue to jostle in the narrow space between escalators and bookshelves; and increasingly, the small rooms originally intended for private study would be pressed into service as library administration points. In their shared workrooms, assistants of the different departments became all too aware of the problems involved in the introduction of new services and aids in an increasingly crowded, uncompleted building.

One of the most appreciated of these aids is Infobank, a computer-produced listing in microfiche form of up-to-date-information on more than 5,500 clubs and societies operating in the Auckland metropolitan area.

A lending service of "talking books" on tape cassettes is proving popular beyond expectation. They are available to those whose eyesight is not sufficient for reading, but who do not qualify for the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind's talking book service, for people who find it difficult to turn the pages of a standard book, and for children who have a specific learning difficulty. The tapes are supplied at cost, plus a charge for copying (once copyright has been granted), and issued free to Auckland city residents. Cassette playback machines may be borrowed by those without them.

One of the most time-consuming but potentially far-reaching innovations of the 1970s was the preparation and introduction of a computerised issue system. The work was carried out over a period of two years by the library staff and the data processing section of the Auckland City Council, augmented by a number of temporary workers. The Plessey "light pen" method of issue was introduced at all units of the Auckland Public Libraries in March 1979.

A label attached to every item available for borrowing contains an optical coded message representing the particular number assigned to the item. This number incorporates digits indicating where the item is held in the library system and its individual copy number in the case of duplications of a title.

Every borrower is issued with a membership card carrying a similar bar-coded label representing the number allocated to the borrower. To register an issue, an electronic stylus or "light pen" is passed over the code label on the item to be borrowed and the label on the membership card. A computer registers the transaction by matching item number and membership number. A particular boon to borrowers is the speed with which it is now possible to "trap" through the computer, items which have been reserved, including titles of fiction.

Further steps in the automation of library procedures have included the reproduction

on microfiche of the roll of borrowers and the complete catalogue of the library in abbreviated form. These can be read on microfiche viewers located in all libraries.

Like their patrons, librarians look forward to the day when there will be instaant access to the catalogue by means of the computer; the day when, at the push of a button, a wide range of information will become available on a visual display unit (VDU) of the kind common in airline offices and banks. That day will mark the end of the space-taking cumbersome card catalogue so long familiar in libraries.

Some wit once remarked that while "lutes and recorders may cure your disorders, if you really fear the Lord, you'll learn to play the harpsichord."

True or false, there was a moment of excitement in 1978 for a young New Zealand harpsichordist, Robert Petre, who was employed as a student assistant in the rare books room of the central library. In a copy of a book, *The Harpsichord Master*, printed in London in 1697 and donated to the library in 1937, Petre came across several pieces by the English composer, Henry Purcell (1659-1695), nowhere listed in the catalogue of the complete works of Purcell published in 1963. Petre's discovery caused wide interest in the musical world, since the 1697 edition of *The Harpsichord Master*, which was one of a series of teaching works on the instrument, is the first occasion when "Instructions for Learners" are ascribed directly to Purcell ("Written by ye late famous Mr H. Purcell at the request of a particular friend and taken from his owne Manuscript never before publish't . . ."[172])

The sound not only of harpsichord, but of crumhorn, dulcian, flute and viola da Gamba were heard in the rare books room in the summer of 1976-77 as expatriate Auckland musicians Layton Ring and his wife Christine, together with their elder son William and joined by Ronald Dellow, delighted an audience with two hour-long performances. Also heard in the rare books room through the 1970s was the sound of poets reading their own verse in lunch-hour recitals; visitors such as Australian Judith Wright and Englishman Jon Silkin; locals like Hone Tuwhare, Kendrick Smithyman, M.K. Joseph, Jan Kemp, Riemke Ensing and Russell Haley.

"Meet the Writer" sessions saw authors like John A. Lee, Keith Sinclair, E.M. Blaiklock and Gordon Dryland interviewed. The Australian aboriginal writer and civil rights worker, Kath Walker, held a crowded room enthralled; American psychologist Bonaro Overstreet drew an appreciative audience; and the ballads of the poet of the Yukon, Robert Service, were given fresh life for a roomful of young and old by Canadian actor Charles Hayter.

Of all the events that took place in the rare books room, the most unusual and moving occurred in the spring of 1979. At a simple but dignified ceremony on 14 September, Whina Cooper presented the library with a framed copy of the Memorial of Right, the original scroll of which had been handed to the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon W.E. Rowling, in 1975, at the conclusion of the Maori landmarch from Te Hapua in the far

north to Wellington. Together with the memorial, the library was also presented with a beautiful white cloak decorated with kiwi feathers, which had belonged to Mrs Cooper's companion and nurse, and which will be displayed with the document.

Such occasions were welcome in a setting never intended to accommodate them. Staff and public alike wondered how much longer it would be before the empty shell of the basement auditorium would be developed as an intimate theatre, cinema and general purposes area. Just as habitues of the newspaper-room, moved in mid-1976 from the basement of the town hall to rooms in Pyros House in Rutland Street, were guessing as to when their eight-year isolation from the library would end. The completion of the auditorium and the return of the newspaper-room had been scheduled for the second stage of the new central library. The wait for each was to be longer than anyone anticipated.

37

DIVISION AND DECISION

IRONICALLY, the last film to be screened at the Embassy cinema was *Billion Dollar Threat.* As a title it was prophetic even if, allowing for the rate of galloping inflation of late-1979, something of an exaggeration. The sum the city council was prepared to outlay to complete the library was $3.1 million of loan money already authorised, together with funds from revenue at the rate of $600,000 a year over a period of three years. It was a decision reached after five years of frustration and five months of division within the council and in the community at large.

In June 1969 the city council had resolved that, subject to the availability of finance, the final stage of the library would be completed by its centennial year of 1980. The month of March 1974 found the city librarian reporting that, if the target were to be met, work would have to begin by 1977.[173]

In this he had the support of the city architect. Ewen Wainscott reported that an estimated $2,580,000 would be needed to extend the public floors at ground and first floor level, provide book storage on the second floor and in the two basements (in the lower one the auditorium would be completed), and extend book processing, administration and staff facilities on the third floor. The estimate included floor coverings but not furniture. Demolition of the cinema and other charges would raise the figure to $3,100,000.[174]

Armed with the arguments and accompanying data supplied by the librarian and architect, the council went to the Local Authorities Loans Board for approval to raise the sum of $3.1 million to complete the library.

The initial set-back came in early 1977. At its meeting on 2 February, the loans board decided "in view of the continuing pressure on the loan market", to defer the application to raise a library loan for a period of six months.

Within the next half-year the council's capital works programme was amended, with the effect of lowering the library's priority. The loans board accordingly did not find it difficult at its next meeting in August 1977 to defer the decision to approve the raising of the library loan for yet another six months.

"If, however," wrote the secretary of the board, "your Council decides to accord the project a higher priority than it has currently been given, please advise me of the fact in early January 1978, and I will submit it to the meeting in February." A "loan freeze" introduced by the government delayed sanction for the raising of the money until May 1978.

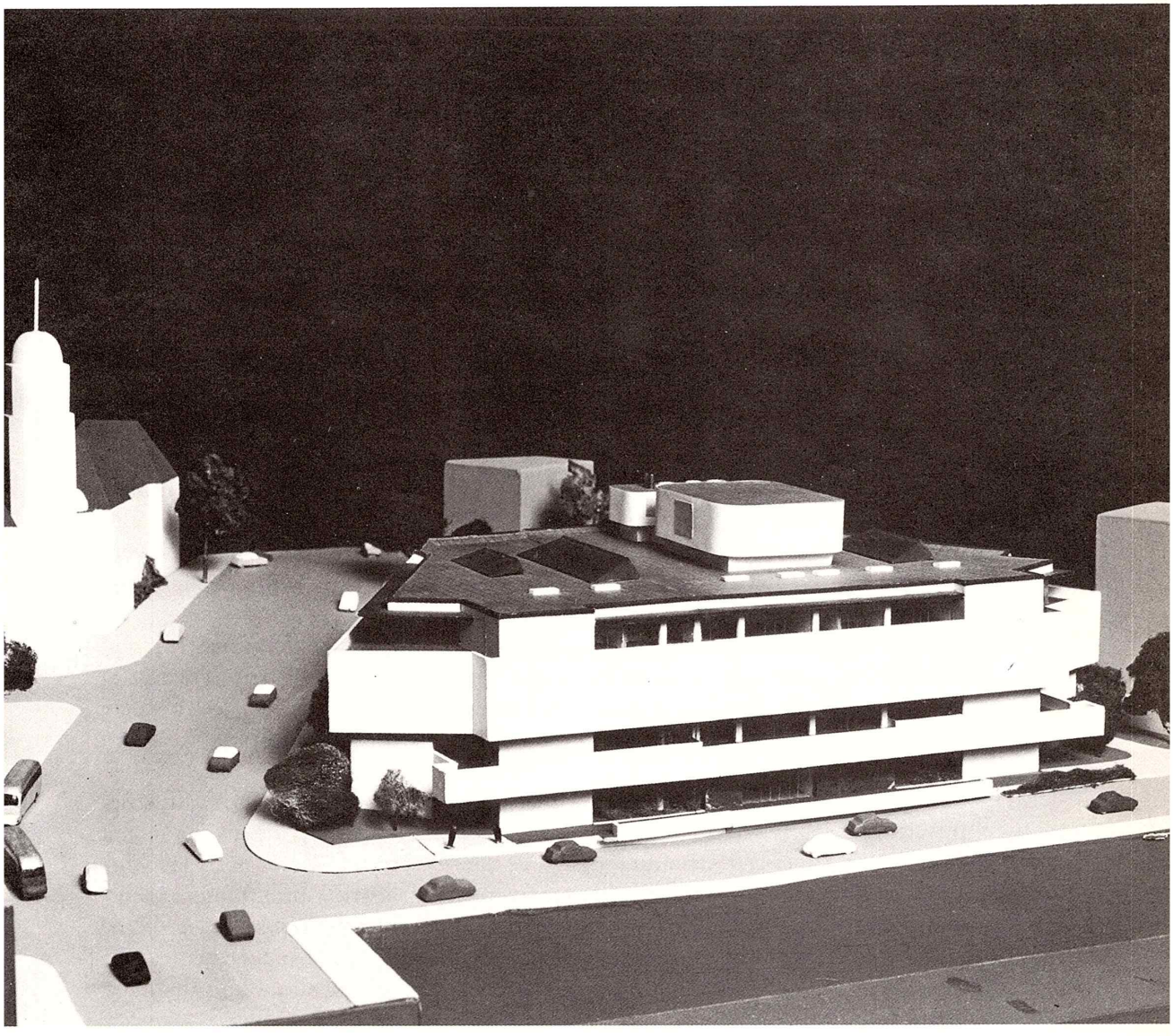
On 22 February 1979 the city council adopted as one of its objectives the completion of the second stage of the central library. Inexorably, though, the date for completion was receding further into the future. Now May 1982 was set as the earliest possible. To achieve that, the Embassy would have to be down by July 1979, so that tenders could be called in August 1979 and the main contract started in October.

When they were advised that the cinema would have to be vacated by 30 June 1979 the owners, Kerridge-Odeon, requested that they be allowed to continue screening films on a weekly or monthly tenancy if there were any delay in carrying out the proposed demolition.

Convinced that the council was determined to go ahead with the completion of the building, the general manager of Kerridge-Odeon then asked, not for a stay of execution from demolition, but retention of the Embassy as a place of entertainment. In a letter to the *New Zealand Herald* on 3 May 1979, he stressed that his company paid $25,000 a year in rent to the city, while the library extension would not produce revenue.

To this the single-minded chairman of the council's cultural activities and health committee controlling the library, Councillor Catherine A. Tizard, retorted that the company had known since the mid-1950s that the area occupied by the cinema was going to be needed eventually for the library; moreover, that on 19 July 1971 when told that a further tenancy of site would be granted only till 1 March 1977, Sir Robert Kerridge had indicated that "We are, of course, very happy to confirm our acceptance of the offer."

Praise for the council's stand came from an editorial in the *Auckland Star* on 3 May 1979; "Now the Council is to go ahead with the second stage of the project, Aucklanders will see it as a belated, but none the less, welcome move. A complaint that the completion of the library will mean the loss of a cinema will scarcely impress those who



The model shows how the Auckland Public Library will look when completed. The second stage will extend to the left from a point just behind the white car in the foreground. At the extreme left is a model of the 1887 building. Auckland City Council model

remember how few tears were shed over the demolition of the Regent and Majestic cinemas in Queen Street."

On 1 July 1979, the Embassy was still open for business. With the anticipated cost of erecting the second stage of the library having risen to $4,322,329 ($5,977,730 if necessary

work on the existing first stage were included), the city librarian and the city architect were instructed "to examine the project on the basis of priorities, omitting areas of completed space which may be considered desirable but not essential at this date."

Their alternative proposals covered the completion of the structure, external finishes, and the interior of the ground and first floors. They excluded the completion of the auditorium and foyer, the return of the newspaper room to the main library and the provision of extra book storage.

In July 1979 the cost of the modified proposal was put at $3,991,000 for the building, or $4,784,700 if furniture and fittings and all other incidental charges were included.

Faced with the alternative costing, the city council nevertheless decided on 16 July 1979 to go ahead with the completion of the entire building at a cost of $5,997,730; also to apply to the Local Authorities Loans Board for permission to raise the short-fall brought about by inflation and upgraded standards of construction obligatory since 1975.

The council's policy and finance committee was still not satisfied that the right move was being made. In the four years between 1975 and 1979, the estimated cost to complete had rocketed from $3.1 million to $5.99 million. The cultural activities and health committee was asked to look again at the benefits that would accrue if the proposal went ahead, and the disadvantages there would be if it did not.[175] Meantime the Embassy remained open, with the tenders for its demolition deferred.

Reporting yet again, Duthie could say nothing more than that there had been an increase of 108% in patronage of the central library in eight years, and that "the cost of the project will undoubtedly escalate still further, and deferment at this stage could delay completion of one of the city's most important civic and cultural buildings for a very long time."[176]

His colleague, the city architect, explained to the council's capital works team that "the most critical aspect which makes the completion of the library urgent is the fact that the latest requirements in structural design of the Ministry of Works and Development have been upgraded to include design for ductility in the structural frame, a factor which was not required in the design of stage 1. If applied to the second stage of the library, it could have devastating effects on the functioning and appearance of the finished building."[177] "It is this," Duthie's report concluded, "probably more than any other single factor which lends urgency to the completion of the building."

The Residents and Ratepayers Association now entered the fray. On 3 September it urged the city council to consult the ratepayers before raising another $3 million. Expanding itself into the Ratepayers and Residents Action Association (Inc), it prepared submissions for presentation to the cultural activities and health committee in connection with the proposed demolition of the Embassy cinema. "There is the question," the association said, "of whether having an extended library is more desirable from a cultural point of view than having a cinema. It seems to us that the cinema (albeit a commercial

enterprise) is reaching a very much greater number of people in providing for their entertainment than a library . . ."[178]

The short answer to that statement was that the cinema attracted in a year some 230,000 patrons, the central library in excess of 600,000.

Nonetheless, at a special meeting on 25 September, a divided council resolved, on the casting vote of the mayor, Sir Dove-Myer Robinson, not to proceed with the completion of the second stage of the library, and to defer all further discussion of the matter until March 1980. The mayor wanted a poll of ratepayers held. Retorted councillor Tizard, "That proposal would kill the library stone dead!"

For their part the protest group announced that if the city council decided to proceed with the second stage, the association would get the necessary 5,500 signatures of ratepayers on the electoral roll to demand a poll on the proposal.[179]

Backing for bold action was to come from both daily newspapers. In its leading article for 27 September, the *New Zealand Herald* commented: "Auckland has a long and exceptionally fine record of library service to its own ratepayers and those of its neighbouring local authorities. At the heart of that service now stands half a library. What sort of city could rest content with that? What sort of future citizen will thank us for shirking a hard decision now?"

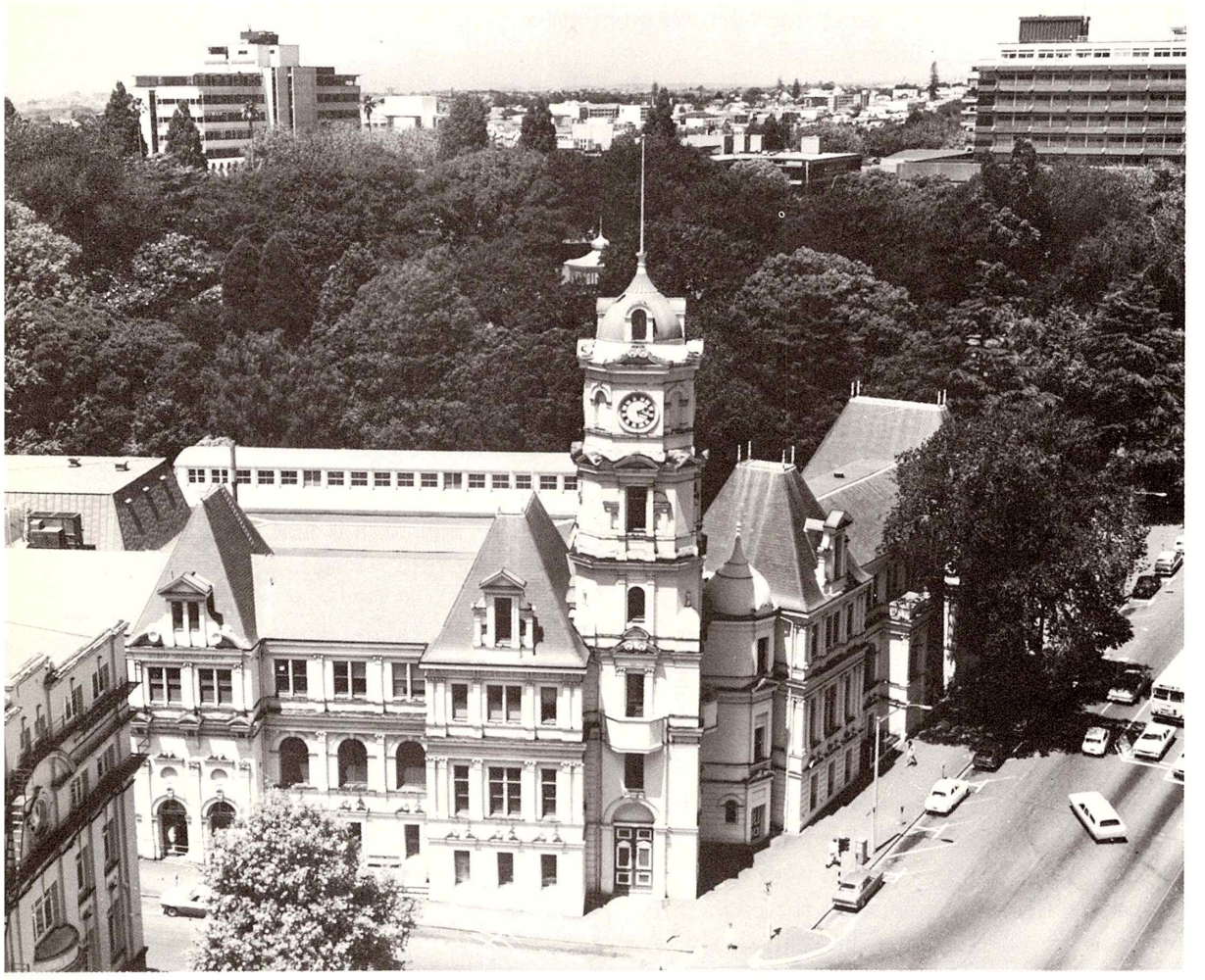
The *Auckland Star* weighed in on the same day. "The Auckland City Council's hesitancy about completing the central library was as predictable as the ending of an inferior mystery novel. Throughout the city's history, successive councils have never lacked reasons to delay providing Auckland with a library appropriate to its size and status . . . The contrast with the determined way the Council pushed ahead with its $7 million carpark under Aotea Square is dramatic. Yet the library has at least as big a role as the council's six parking buildings in attracting people to the city.

"Many Aucklanders, indeed, will see the long-lasting benefits to be derived from the completed library as justifying the council in giving it the highest priority in its desire to bring life and trade to the central city."

"Mayor Robbie" remained confident as to the result of the poll he proposed. "I'm satisfied," he said, "that because of the pride of the ordinary ratepayer in his community, we'd get the go-ahead with a substantial majority."[180] The president of the Ratepayers and Residents Action Association was adamant; "Undoubtedly, the ratepayers would vote it out!"[181] And, expressing anger at alleged council moves to adopt the new proposals for financing the second stage, he promised that his group "would go out of its way to have those councillors ousted at the next elections"[182] (in late 1980).

At yet another special meeting on 18 October 1979, one of the councillors, Trevor V. Rogers, was able to set the council on a new line of positive action. He had been overseas at the time the decision had been taken not to proceed with the completion of the library and to delay further discussion until 1980.

By 12 votes to seven, the council resolved to proceed as soon as possible with the



In 1980 the Auckland City Art Gallery occupies the French Renaissance-style building that formerly housed the library as well as the gallery. The view over the trees of Albert Park takes in the library of the University of Auckland, left of centre, and the distant buildings of Parnell.

Auckland Public Library

erection of the second stage, using loan money already uplifted, and funds from revenue at the rate of $600,000 a year over the period of the next three years, together with such further loan money from the existing loan sanction necessary to meet contractual requirements for a modified construction. There was also the proviso that, unless structurally required, no further expenditure was to be outlaid on the existing library until the addition had been completed.

Two days later, the Ratepayers and Residents Action Association announced that it

In this late-1979 view, demolition of the 43-year-old Embassy cinema is about to begin, to make way for the completion of the library. Auckland Public Library

would distribute 20,000 forms petitioning the council to have the decision reversed. "Get mad!" read the newsletter accompanying the petition, "It's your money the Auckland City Council are just about to splash around the new extensions to the Central Library. Who uses the Central Library? A stroll through the place any day of the week will reveal that most Central customers are University Students, Auckland Technical Institute Students, and those unfortunates with no-where else to go. On the principle that 'user pays', the Government should be providing 90% of the finance for the new Extensions – and reimburse Ratepayers for the first stage of the building."[183]

The absurdity of such arguments was quickly revealed by the city librarian's statement that of the 56,000 *adult* city ratepayers and residents registered as borrowers, 18,000 were enrolled at and regularly used the central library.[184]

Undeterred, the protesters wrote to the city secretary on 29 November, claiming that, in the four weeks since they had sent out the petition, 2,500 had signed and returned it, "showing that many ratepayers oppose the erection of the Central Library Building without a poll at first being conducted to ascertain their views".

In the meantime the council had, on 8 November, revoked its resolution of 13 September 1979, to apply to the loans board for permission to raise an additional $3,000,000, and had advised the board to that effect.

A petition from 20 Auckland city ratepayers was presented to the next ordinary meeting of the council on 6 December 1979 requesting that a poll be taken before the council went ahead with its proposal to complete the central library. Having considered it, the council decided to proceed with the completion of the library and since tenders for the demolition of the cinema had already been let, to decline the petition.[184a]

On Friday 7 December 1979, the curtain closed across the screen at the Embassy cinema for the final time. On the following Monday the wreckers moved in. The building schedule called for demolition to be completed by early February 1980, site excavations to start within a matter of days after that, tenders to be called for the building contract on 1 February and opened at a meeting of the city council in April 1980. Such is the position as this history goes to print at the end of 1979.

38

GRATEFUL PEOPLE

IT WAS A far-sighted Sir George Grey who confided to his audience in the Theatre Royal in 1883 what he considered to be "The characteristics of a good library". "If it is a proper one," he told them, "it should be such as to compel people to resort to Auckland who wish for information on a great variety of subjects."[185]

Grey knew then, as F. A. Sharr reminded us recently, that the mechanics' institutes of earlier times had declined and died because they failed to expand and improve their service as public demand and expectation developed. The role of the public library for nearly a hundred years, from about the middle of the 19th century, was to offer facilities for self-education to those who had been educationally deprived.[186]

In the vastly-changed world of the final decades of the 20th century, Sharr sees the need for the development of information services as perhaps the most important role for the public library.

During the 1970s the people of Auckland turned increasingly to the Auckland Public Library for information leading to a better understanding of some of the major topics of the decade affecting New Zealand: for example, the negotiations in 1971 which led, two years later, to Britain's entry into the EEC; the repercussions which followed the walk-out of black African nations at the 1976 Montreal Olympics in protest at New Zealand's continued sporting links with South Africa; the report of the Royal Commis-

sion on Contraception, Sterilisation and Abortion of 1977 which so divided the nation; and about such hotly-debated issues as race relations, conservation, protection of the environment, and the energy crisis.

It is likely to be the development of such information services, complementing traditional library resources and activities, which offers the best prospects for the continued progress of the Auckland Public Library as it enters its second century.

The completion of the central library has not been achieved by the centennial year of 1980. There will be, however, this commemorative history and activities in the month of September to mark one hundred years of service.

By the happiest of coincidences, it was early in the centennial year of the library which he has guided with such distinction for more than a quarter of a century, that Robert Duthie was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.). Few librarians in New Zealand have been so honoured, and none has better deserved it.

In acknowledgement of the contribution made by staff and the high regard in which the library system is generally held, the city council has instituted The Auckland Public Library Centennial Study Award. This will allow suitably qualified Auckland city librarians to visit appropriate libraries in New Zealand and overseas to study a particular aspect of librarianship or to gain experience in some specialised field of library work. Study leave on full pay will be granted for a period of up to six months, with an allowance of $1,000 (to be adjusted annually in the light of current costs). The award will be made each year for at least the next five.

Not every user has been moved to praise the service of the Auckland Public Library and its staff. Over the years, though, there have been more bouquets than brickbats in appreciation of a service which consists in the main of people helping people.

Typical of many library users was a colleague of Robert Duthie's, not long retired and living in an isolated country area: "Dear Bob, A note to say that last month I joined your library. Our bus company has decided to take us to Auckland twice a month, and so it became possible. It is an indignity *not* to be able to use a large library, and I have very much disliked it. Wonderful to be able to use your library and wonderful to have access to all that wonderful bibliographical equipment which hits you as you enter the front door. I feel as though I were no longer cut off from the information I want."[187]

A regular library user at branch level: "At this particular library the librarian and her staff have always been most helpful and co-operative, particularly when dealing with child borrowers. I have watched the way in which they patiently help Polynesian members choose books - make recommendations and explain the library system to them, help them with their projects for school and in general being thoroughly helpful to all members young and old."[188]

A writer and critic: "I found my chief collaborators in that book-crammed, slightly-musty room hard by Albert Park. The reference staff have led me to hitherto unknown sources, and they have traced obscure quotations and have tracked down elusive facts.

In this, they have done everything but write the books and essays of which I have claimed nominal ownership."[189]

Leaders in industry: "I think the service ACTIS offers is invaluable."[190] "Every enquiry, however obtuse or difficult, was met with a quantity of information or a positive plan of action for obtaining same."[191] And, most commonly: "Whatever did we do before we had ACTIS to call on?"

And, finally, one who spoke for the majority of a century of members of the Auckland Public Library system: "Just for a moment, I'm tempted into day-dreaming. If all the books I took out of the library were placed end to end, they'd reach from here to – where? South America, roughly, I'd say. How many millions of words? Heaven only knows. Quite an astronomical number. And then a grimmer fantasy; suppose I'd had to *buy* all those books . . .? At this point, I begin to realise very clearly something I've only been dimly aware of in the past – and that is that I'm a sort of millionaire. I don't own a steam-yacht, or a Rolls-Royce, or a string of racehorses – yet. But for years past, I've been a book millionaire. That, in a couple of words, is what the public library system has meant to me. And not only to me, but to the other subscribers, too. In this one, not unimportant respect, we're *all* millionaires . . . In the rapidly, even dizzily-changing world we live in, the public library system is one of the things we can most surely rely on to preserve a core of sanity in the community and to help us keep our heads and avoid panic."[192]

APPENDIXES
1 – CHRONOLOGY

1842	30 September Mechanics' Institute opened
1872	Sir George Grey proposed to donate books if a public library were established in Auckland
1879	18 December Auckland City Council took over Mechanics' Institute Library
1880	7 September Auckland Free Public Library opened in Mechanics' Institute building
1882	19 August Sir George Grey offered his library to the citizens of Auckland
1883	18 April Edward Costley bequeathed £12,500 ($25,000) to the library
1887	26 March Opening of new library at corner of Wellesley and Coburg (now Kitchener) Streets
1889	1 October Lending library opened
1898	19 September Death of Sir George Grey in London
1905	29 March Leys Institute library opened
1913	19 March Grafton branch library opened
	13 December First Parnell branch library opened
1915	2 October First Remuera branch library opened
1916	22 March Old Colonists' Museum opened
1918	27 August Epsom branch library opened
	16 October Children's section Central Library opened
1924	30 July New Parnell branch library opened
	13 December Grey Lynn branch library opened
1926	31 July New Remuera branch library opened
	20 November First Pt Chevalier branch library opened
1928	13 June New music section Central Library opened
1930	8 September 50th jubilee celebrations of Central Library
1931	13 June Tamaki (St Heliers Bay) branch opened
	27 June First Avondale branch library opened
1934	28 June Free borrowing for children of Auckland city ratepayers and residents
1946	3 January Free lending service began
1950	31 January Mobile library service began
1953	19 September Auckland City Council adopted policy of erection of new Central Library on site bounded by Wellesley, Lorne and Rutland Streets

1960 30 May Temporary Glen Innes branch library opened in Tamaki College
1966 17 March New Glen Innes branch library opened
1970 22 May Mobile 2 service began
6 October Mobile 1 service began to schools
7 October Co-operative service with Ellerslie borough council began
1971 25 November First stage of new Central Library opened
1972 1 April Co-operative service with One Tree Hill Borough Council began
1973 18 September New Avondale branch library opened
1975 22 November Co-operative service with Mt Albert Borough Council began
1977 20 August Co-operative service with Mt Roskill Borough Council began
22 August Mobile 3 service began
1979 18 October Auckland City decided to proceed with second stage of Central Library
10 December Demolition of Embassy cinema began, to clear site for second stage of central library

2 – PRINCIPAL BENEFACTIONS AND BEQUESTS

1 – AUCKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

1882. Sir George Grey announced his intention to give to the citizens of Auckland his valuable and extensive library, including many rare manuscripts and early printed books, official documents and a large collection of books in Maori. In all he gave some 14,000 volumes.

1883. £12,500 ($25,000) from the estate of Edward Costley.

1885. James Tannock Mackelvie presented a valuable collection of more than 500 books, many on the subject of art.

1904-1928. More than 2,300 volumes, including manuscripts and early printed books, from Henry Shaw.

1913-1927. 1,500 volumes of early printed books, and books on English drama and music from Fred Shaw.

1927. Lewis Eady Music Collection began with the presentation of over 600 volumes of music scores and literature presented by L. Alfred Eady on behalf of his father, Lewis R. Eady.

1947. £3,000 ($6,000) from the estate of William Townsend for the music department of central library.

1953. Reed-Dumas collection (presented by Frank Wild Reed) of more than 4,000 items by or about Alexandre Dumas.

1963. £25,000 ($50,000) from the Auckland Savings Bank to establish a "Hall of Technology" in proposed new central library.

1963. Portrait bust of the Auckland writer Frank Sargeson, by Alison Duff, presented by Arts Advisory Council of New Zealand.

1964. Establishment of Leys Building and General Trust Account of £25,188 ($50,376).

1965. £5,000 ($10,000) donated by Mrs G. B. Colson for children's department of proposed new central library.

1966. John A. Lee collection of manuscripts, pamphlets and political papers.

1971. Bequest of $10,000 from the estate of Mrs G. B. Colson to the children's department of central library. This augmented her donation of $10,000 in 1964, and was increased by a further $5,000 from the Colson family.

1971. Present and past staff of the library mark the occasion of the opening of the first stage of the new central library with the gift of a portrait bust of Auckland poet R. A. K. Mason by Anthony Stones.

1972. Portrait bust of politician and writer John A. Lee by Molly Macalister presented on "indefinite loan" by Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand.

1974. $5,536 of ACTIS (Auckland Commercial and Technical Information Service) funds transferred to Auckland City Council.

1977. Freida Dickens collection of more than 2,500 theatre and concern programmes.

1979. Hilda Wiseman Collection of more than 1,500 book-plates.

1980. Walter Auburn Collection of 17th and 18th century old master etchings and engravings.

2 — LEYS INSTITUTE

1899. Income from the estate of William Leys, valued at £5,723 ($11,446), to erect and equip a free library and mechanics' institute in Ponsonby.

1904. Thomson Wilson Leys meets half the cost of erecting and equipping Leys Institute in Ponsonby and undertakes to provide it with a library.

1906. £1,000 ($2,000) from the estate of William Mason to erect and equip the Leys Institute gymnasium.

1945. Albertland Trust of £1,000 ($2,000) established by Sir Cecil Leys for the purchase of books of a scientific and technical nature at Leys Institute.

Leys Institute Building and Library Endowment Trust established by Sir Cecil Leys. Funds made available by the trust have materially assisted the work of the Leys Institute library with children.

1958. Bequest of £1,000 ($2,000) by Winifred Upton to buy reference books for Leys Institute.

1958. Hilary Leys Memorial Wing for children erected with funds made available from the estate of Sir Cecil Leys.

3 – CHAIRMEN OF THE (LIBRARY) COMMITTEE

From 1880 to 1915 the Mayor was ex-officio chairman of all city council committees;

1880	Thomas Peacock
1880-1883	James McCosh Clark
1883-1886	William Richard Waddel
1886-1889	Albert Edward Tyrrell Devore
1889-1891	John Henry Upton
1891-1893	William Crowther
1893-1896	James Job Holland
1896-1897	Abraham Boardman
1897-1898	Peter Dignan
1898-1901	David Goldie
1901	Sir John Logan Campbell
1901-1903	Alfred Kidd
1903-1905	Sir Edwin Mitchelson
1905-1909	Sir Arthur Mielziner Myers
1909-1910	Charles Daniel Grey
1910-1911	Lemuel John Bagnall
1911-1915	Sir Christopher James Parr

Since 1915 chairmen of committees have been appointed by the council from members of the council.

1915-1917	Peter Mitchell Mackay
1917-1919	Eliza Ellen Melville
1919-1920	Andrew Jack Entrican
1920-1935	Eliza Ellen Melville
1935-1936	John William Yarnall
1936-1938	Norman Vazey Douglas
1938-1946	Eliza Ellen Melville
1946-1950	John William Kealy Jnr.
1950-1953	Walter Max Tongue
1953-1956	Mary Manson Dreaver
1956-1965	Frederick Norman Ambler
1965-1971	Harold Edward Watts
1971-1977	Richard Henry Lindo Ferguson
1977-	Catherine Anne Tizard

4 — LONG-SERVING LIBRARY STAFF

John Barr	1913-1952
Wynne Colgan	1946-
Abram Dalgliesh Cunningham	1921-1951
Hilda Doherty	1916-1954
Robert Duthie	1947-
Dulcie Louisa Haszard	1914-1956
Lorna Holdsworth	1922-1960
Grace Joll	1922-1955
Mary Clare Kilbride (nee Bone)	1943-
Winifred Blanche Lewins	1930-1961
Valerie Hyatt Longworth	1946-
Dorothy Evelyn Lyon	1938-1979
May Elizabeth McGuire	1905-1941
Elizabeth Messer	1929-1959
Coral Mary Ridling	1945-1952
	1953-
Joan Valerie Rutter	1940-1972
	1977-
Edward Shillington	1880-1913
Gertrude Mary Kittson Terry	1935-1965

5 – STATISTICS

LIBRARY	Bookstock as at 31 March 1979	Membership as at 3 December 1979	Issues April 1978-March 1979
Central	420,720	28,263	516,923
Avondale branch	30,469	6,949	216,141
Epsom branch	36,551	7,621	235,673
Glen Innes branch	26,963	6,588	175,402
Grafton branch	26,411	1,821	73,318
Grey Lynn branch	15,891	2,420	81,046
Leys Institute branch	59,927	4,825	135,542
Mobile 2	-	2,384	94,330
Mobile 3	-	3,015	87,195
Mt Albert branch	36,394	12,122	354,897
Mt Roskill branch	40,181	15,985	397,776
Parnell branch	22,640	2,256	74,224
Pt Chevalier branch	20,460	3,295	113,190
Remuera branch	39,389	10,351	371,251
St Heliers Bay branch	34,455	9,460	330,905
Rental stock (Central and branches)	73,185		
Pool and headquarters stock	4,405		
TOTAL :	888,041	117,355	3,257,813
PLUS –			
Municipal Reference Library	11,979		
Music scores (Central)	21,726		
LP records (Central & branches)	9,098		
LP cassettes (branches)	449		
Art reproductions (Central and branches)	1,835		
Art posters (branches)	1,128		

BOOKSTOCK

1890-1891	23,307	Central library only. Includes 11,274 in Grey Collection.
1903-1904	39,923	As above.
1906-1907	41,226	As above.
1913-1914	49,352	Central library, 2 branches, plus Shaw Collection.
1917-1918	86,655	Central library, 3 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1920-1921	103,486	Central library, 4 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1927-1928	146,189	Central library, 6 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1932-1933	171,321	Central library, 8 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1934-1935	181,225	As above.
1943-1944	240,050	As above.
1947-1948	278,386	As above.
1950-1951	312,859	As above plus Mobile Service begun 1950.
1966-1967	442,219	Central library, 10 branches (including Leys Institute from 1964) and one mobile library.
1973-1974	623,136	Central library, 10 branches, and 2 mobile libraries.
1975-1976	727,504	Central library, 11 branches, and 2 mobile libraries.
1977-1978	865,939	Central library, 12 branches, and 2 mobile libraries.

MEMBERSHIP

1890-1891	400	Central library only.
1903-1904	802	Central library only.
1906-1907	751	Leys Institute included from 1905.
1913-1914	1,275	Grafton & Parnell included from 1913.
1917-1918	2,309	Remuera included from 1915 (schools service excluded).
1920-1921	4,651	Epsom included from 1918.
1927-1928	6,280	Grey Lynn included from 1924. Pt Chevalier from 1926.
1932-1933	7,021	Avondale and St. Heliers Bay included from 1931.

1934-1935	10,703	Free service for children of ratepayers and residents from 1934.
1943-1944	18,789	As above.
1947-1948	36,007	Free lending service from 1946.
1950-1951	50,910	Mobile service from 1950.
1966-1967	71,740	Glen Innes included from 1960.
1973-1974	75,618	First stage new central library from 1971.
1975-1976	87,105	Mt Albert included from 1975.
1977-1978	106,920	Mt Roskill included from 1977.

ISSUES

Year	Vols. Issued	Comments
1890-1891	15,079	Central library only. Lending library opened 1889.
1903-1904	43,112	Central library only.
1906-1907	39,841	Includes Leys Institute from 1905.
1913-1914	37,693	Central library, 2 branches and Leys Institure.
1917-1918	158,972	Central library, 3 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1920-1921	355,948	Central library, 4 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1927-1928	698,093	Central library, 6 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1932-1933	673,520	Central library, 8 branches, Leys Institute and schools service.
1934-1935	1,068,350	As above. Free lending service to children began 1934.
1943-1944	1,461,176	As above.
1947-1948	1,478,369	As above. Free lending service began 1946.
1950-1951	1,744,543	As above. Mobile service began 1950.
1966-1967	2,012,099	Central library, 10 branches (including Leys Institute from 1964) and one mobile library.
1973-1974	2,477,558	Central library, 10 branches and 2 mobile libraries.
1975-1976	2,528,746	Central library, 11 branches and 2 mobile libraries.
1977-1978	3,073,415	Central library, 12 branches, 2 mobile libraries and Municipal Reference Library.

6 – REFERENCES

1 Captain Williams was a midshipman on the *Chelydra*, and later landing-waiter for Her Majesty's Customs in Auckland. The quotation is from R. A. A. Sherrin's *Early History of New Zealand from Earliest Times to 1840.* Brett, 1890.

2 Minutes Auckland Mechanics' Institute 5 September 1842 p101.

3 Autobiography of Peter McDonald in manuscript p101.

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32 as in 31 above pp217-8.
33 as in 31-2 above p271.
34 Address by Sir George Grey in Theatre Royal 5 June 1883.
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38 *Auckland Star* 28 March 1887 p3.
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47 as in 46 above.
48 J. A. W. Bennett. as in 44 above.
49 as in 44 and 48 above.
50 Quoted by John Barr in *Three Score Years and Ten (The Auckland Public Library 1880-1950).* Stevenson's letter is included in the Grey autograph letter collection of the library.
51 *The Leys Institute St Mary's Road, Ponsonby.* Brett, 1906 p29.
52 *Auckland Star* 20 March 1964.
53 Minutes Auckland City Council 21 August 1913 pp371-2.
54 Report of chief librarian dated 16 April 1914.
55 *Auckland Star* 24 February 1914.
56 *New Zealand Herald* 14 October 1913.
57 *New Zealand Herald* 13 December 1913.

58 James Cowan. *The New Zealand Wars; a History of the Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period.* Govt. Print. 1922-3.
59 Annual report Auckland Public Library 1915-6.
60 *Auckland Star* 24 March 1914.
61 *New Zealand Herald* 17 March 1915.
62 Sir John Logan Campbell, *Poenamo.* Whitcombe & Tombs, 1952 p58.
63 *New Zealand Herald* 29 December 1916.
64 *Auckland Star* 1 January 1917.
65 Annual report Auckland Public Library 1908-9.
66 as in 65 above 1907-8.
67 as in 65 and 66 above 1911-12.
68 A. R. D. Fairburn in a radio talk on station IYA 18 September 1950.
69 Robert Graham – Journal of a passage from Greenock to Auckland etc. (see 8 above) pp100-1.
70 Minutes Auckland City Council 18 April 1918 p816.
71 The day the branch was opened, George Baildon, who was mayor of Grey Lynn at the time of amalgamation with Auckland City and later mayor of Auckland (1925-31), presented to the branch library the mayoral chair of the old Grey Lynn Borough Council.
72 *New Zealand Herald* 15 September 1924.
73 as in 72 above.
74 *New Zealand Herald* 21 July 1925.
75 *New Zealand Herald* 23 July 1925.
76 *New Zealand Herald* 22 June 1929.
77 *Sun* 1 July 1929.
78 *New Zealand Herald* 12 July 1929.
79 *Sun* 12 July 1929.
80 *New Zealand Herald* 25 June 1929.
81 *Sun* 24 June 1929.
82 *Bulletin* (Sydney) 28 August 1929.
83 *Auckland Star* 28 June 1929.
84 *New Zealand Herald* 24 June 1929.
85 Minutes Finance Committee Auckland City Council 9 June 1927.
86 as in 85 above.
87 *Sun* 1 August 1929.
88 *Sun* 3 August 1929.
89 *Sun* 12 August 1929.
90 *Auckland Star* 25 May 1929.
91 *Auckland Star* 23 May 1929.
92 *Auckland Star* 3 January 1928.

93 *Sun* 11 October 1929.
94 Elizabeth T. Jackson, *Delving into the Past of Auckland's Eastern Suburbs*. Section 6 (St Heliers Bay). The author, 1977.
95 W. J. Comrie. *The Presbytery of Auckland: Early Days and Progress*. Reed, 1939.
96 A. W. Reed. *Auckland: The City of the Seas*. Reed, 1955.
97 Following the amalgamation of the Tamaki West Road Board with the city, local residents increasingly came to call their branch library by the name of the suburb.
98 Chief librarian reporting to town clerk 25 February 1933.
99 as in 98 above.
100 Time did not permit a visit to the secondary city of Nelson, and bad weather prevented the couple calling at Lincoln Agricultural College just south of Christchurch.
101 *New Zealand Herald* 27 October 1933.
102 Annual Report Auckland Public Library 1936-7.
103 as in 102 above 1937-8.
104 *Auckland Star* 22 May 1935.
105 Annual Report Auckland Public Library 1937-8.
106 Report of chief librarian to the mayor. Minutes Auckland City Council 10 June 1936 pp1104-5.
107 The main entrance to the air-raid tunnel, which ran under Albert Park to a point in Churchill Street to the east of Constitution Hill, was at the intersection of Victoria Street East, Kitchener Street and Bowen Avenue.
108 *New Zealand Herald* 22 April 1941.
109 *New Zealand Herald* 17 December 1940.
110 *Auckland Star* 2 August 1941.
111 *Auckland Star* 17 September 1941.
112 *Auckland Star* 30 September 1941.
113 *Auckland Star* 26 September 1941.
114 *Auckland Star* 6 May 1938.
115 Planning and supervision of alterations were carried out by the architectural firm of Gummer and Ford.
116 *Auckland Star* 31 December 1945.
117 *New Zealand Herald* 28 May 1947.
118 *Auckland Star* 31 December 1945.
119 *New Zealand Libraries* vol 14 no.1 Jan-Feb 1951 pp15-6.
120 Radio talk on station IYA 7 September 1950.
121 A. W. Reed. *Auckland: The City of the Seas*. Reed 1955.
122 G. W. A. Bush. *Decently and in Order; The Government of the City of Auckland* 1840-1971. Collins, 1971.

123 James Duff Brown. *Manual of Library Economy*. Scott Greenwood, 1903.
124 Eric Westbrook, appointed in 1952, was the first of the five professional directors of the gallery to date.
125 *New Zealand Herald* 10 June 1952.
126 G. W. A. Bush as in 122 above p353.
127 *Auckland Star* 15 October 1953.
128 Annual Report Auckland Public Library 1952-3.
129 *New Zealand Observer* 23 September 1953.
130 A. H. Reed. *An Autobiography*. Reed, 1967. p25.
131 Eric Linklater. *A Year of Space: A Chapter in Autobiography*. Macmillan, 1953.
132 *Auckland Star* 1 July 1933.
133 *Auckland Star* 29 February 1952.
134 *Auckland Star* 25 July 1959.
135 *New Zealand Herald* 10 July 1954.
136 *New Zealand Herald* 28 November 1961.
137 J. C. Reid. *Writing in Auckland: A Selection over a Century*. Catalogue of an exhibition arranged by and held at the central library in 1955 on the occasion of the annual Auckland festival of the arts.
138 *New Zealand Herald* 23 January 1959.
139 Letter from Eileen Mulligan dated 16 May 1960.
140 Report to Auckland City Council 26 June 1959.
141 With the agreement of the trustees of the bank, the donation of $50,000 was put not towards a suggested hall of technology, but into the buying of material for the commerce, science and technology department of the library. A plaque near the passenger lift records the fact.
142 *New Zealand Herald* 28 February 1963.
143 *New Zealand Herald* 18 September 1964.
144 *New Zealand Herald* 9 October 1964.
145 *New Zealand Herald* 14 October 1964.
146 As detailed in the Economic Stabilisation (Building Construction) Regulations 1965, 9 June 1965.
147 *Auckland Star* 27 November 1965.
148 *New Zealand Herald* 25 November 1965.
149 *Auckland Star* 1 December 1965.
150 *New Zealand Herald* 29 January 1966.
151 F. Scott Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby*. Scribner, 1920.
152 From *Comment* by the American lyric poet Robert Frost (1874-1963).
153 *Auckland Star* 25 March 1971.
154 Annual Report Auckland Public Library 1937-8.
155 Minutes Auckland City Council 14 October 1957 pp636-7.

156 In his guide of 1908, Henry Shaw lists two of the manuscripts in the Grey Collection as "Coptic". In March 1950 the Deputy Keeper of the British Museum (working from microfilms sent to him) identified them as being "Ethiopic".

157 A set of nine folio volumes comprising facsimiles of ancient Mexican paintings and hieroglyphics, published in a limited edition of 200 sets between 1830 and 1848.

158 Renovation of the old reference department for art gallery purposes did not begin till late 1979.

159 A zone of fortifications built along the eastern frontier of France between 1929 and 1934.

160 A character whose bald head and large nose were depicted peering over a wall and enquiring, "Wot no (word filled in to suit the circumstances)?" as a comment or protest against a shortage or shortcoming. Widely current particularly in Britain in the later years of the Second World War.

161 In *Accent* (house journal of the Auckland City Council Staff Social Club) vol 1 no.2 1974 p25.

162 *New Zealand Herald* 11 January 1972.

163 *Taranaki Herald* 9 November 1935.

164 A. D. Osborn. *New Zealand Library Resources: Report of a Survey made for the New Zealand Library Association under the Auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. New Zealand Library Association 1960.

165 In a paper prepared by R. Duthie for a library seminar on financial management, held in Auckland on 11 May 1977.

166 *Auckland Star* 25 November 1971.

167 as in 166 above.

168 Robert Burns. *To a Mouse* (1785).

169 City librarian to city architect dated 17 June 1970.

170 When finally appointed, the documents librarian was responsible to the librarian of the commerce, science and technology department, since the bulk of material received was relevant to the work of that department.

171 In the event, Victoria University of Wellington was not designated a depository library for United Nations publications.

172 A facsimile copy of the 1697 edition of *The Harpsichord Master* is to be published shortly by Price Milburn Music Ltd in New Zealand, in the form of a modern re-engraved edition with introduction and editorial notes by Robert Petre.

173 City librarian's report to city secretary 19 March 1974.

174 City architect's report to city secretary 2 September 1975.

175 Minutes Policy and Finance Committee of Auckland City Council 9 August 1979.

176 City librarian to city secretary 24 August 1979.

177 City architect to city secretary 18 September 1979. It was agreed that the existing shear wall on the south elevation of the first stage would be extended above the first floor level up to the level of the third floor to give additional seismic resistance to the existing part of the library where the resisting member to earthquake forces is the present re-inforced concrete frame.

178 Ratepayers and Residents Action Association undated submissions to be presented to a sub-committee of the Auckland City Council with reference to the proposed demolition of the Embassy cinema. The submissions were received on 4 September 1979.

179 *New Zealand Herald* 26 September 1979.

180 *Auckland Star* 27 September 1979.

181 as in 180 above.

182 *Auckland Star* 8 October 1979.

183 *Ratewatcher* newsletter of the Ratepayers and Residents Action Association no.2.

184 City secretary reporting to Auckland City Council 5 November 1979.

184a The Action group's petition with 1,852 signatures requesting a halt in demolishing the Embassy and delaying completion of the library pending a poll of ratepayers, was declined by the council on 7 February 1980.

185 Address given on 5 June 1883 in Theatre Royal.

186 F. A. Sharr in *Public Library Purpose: A Reader* edited by Barry Totterdell. Bingley, 1978 pp136-149.

187 Note from A. G. W. Dunningham, formerly city librarian of Dunedin, to Robert Duthie, received 26 October 1977.

188 Letter from Brenda Cottle to *New Zealand Herald* dated 27 February 1975 re Grafton branch library.

189 E. H. McCormick to G. W. A. Bush as noted in his *Decently and in Order* p353.

190 Letter from Shaws Services Ltd, Auckland dated 3 July 1973.

191 Letter from Industrial Building Systems, Auckland dated 19 December 1975.

192 A. R. D. Fairburn in a radio talk on station IYA 18 September 1950.

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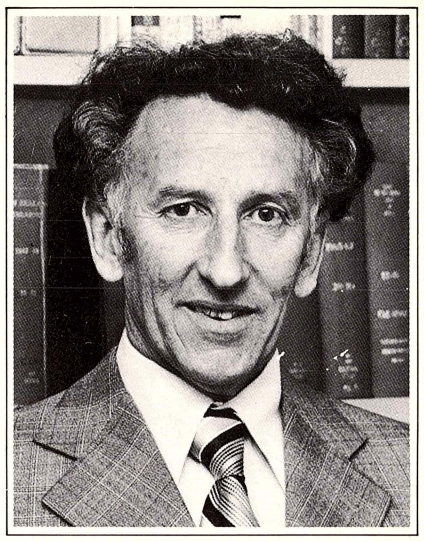


WYNNE COLGAN

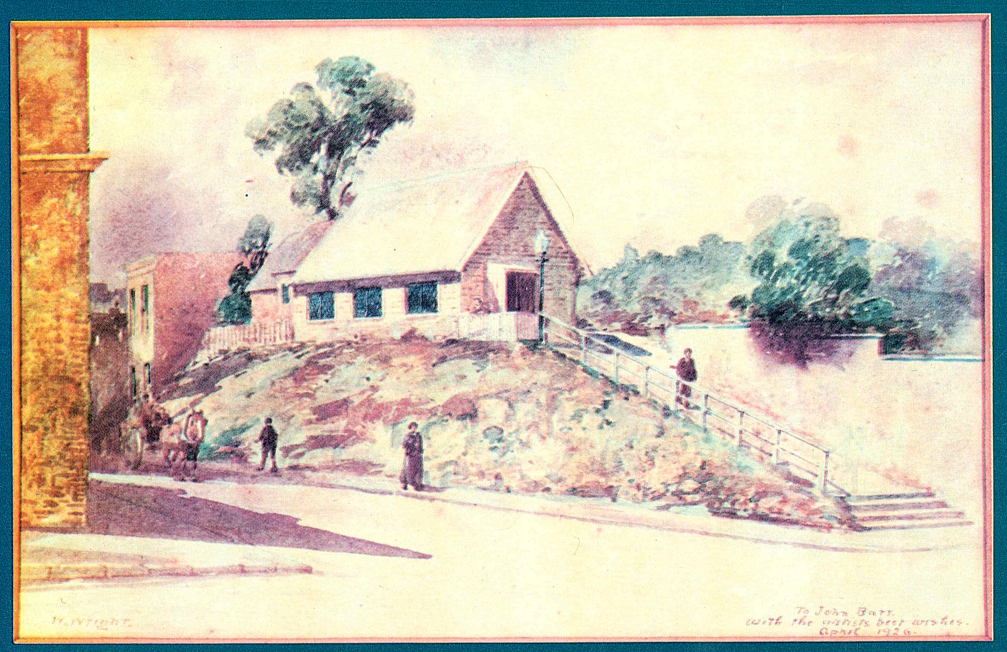
Born in Auckland 1922, Wynne Colgan was educated at the Kohimarama Primary School and the Auckland Grammar School, and is a graduate of the University of Auckland and the New Zealand Library School.

Before his appointment as Deputy City Librarian Auckland in 1954, he was Municipal Reference Librarian for the Auckland City Council, and Reference Librarian at the central library.

During the second world war he served with the Signal Corps of the New Zealand Army and with the ground staff of the Royal New Zealand Air Force in the Pacific Islands.

Co-author of *Ad Augusta: A Centennial History of Auckland Grammar School 1869-1969*, he has also been past president of the Auckland Historical Society, and is currently chairman of the Pioneer Village Project at MOTAT (Auckland's Museum of Transport and Technology). Since 1960 he has served as member of the Auckland regional committee of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

For more than 30 years he has contributed film views to Auckland newspapers and national radio. While deputy-chairman of the Auckland Festival Society, he was also responsible for the inauguration in 1969 of the Auckland International Film Festival, which he was director for the first ten years.



Above
The Auckland Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1842,
became the 1880-87 premises of the Auckland Public Library.
Watercolour by Walter Wright.

Front
Auckland, looking north over Albert Park to the
Waitemata Harbour and Rangitoto Island. In the foreground
is the first stage of the Auckland Public Library;
extensions on the site of the adjacent cinema will complete the library.
Centre is the Auckland City Art Gallery,
where the Auckland Public Library was located 1887-1971.
Photo: Auckland City Council, photographer Sait Akkirman.

Jacket design
Auckland City Council, designer William Chen.

THE GOVERNOR'S GIFT–Auckland Public Library Colgan